SPIRITUAL CULTURE

FREDERICK A. NOBLE

Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library
BV4501 .N748
Noble, Frederic A
Spiritual culture
MAIN
3 9967 00218 4187

ACCESSION NUMBER 39510

SHELF NUMBER BV4501 N748

The Virginia Library

McCormick

Theological Seminary

of the

Presbyterian Church, Chicago.

From the Fund.

RECEIVED Dec. 1914.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_T5-BCG-460

SPIRITUAL CULTURE

FREDERICK A. NOBLE

SPIRITUAL CULTURE

BY

FREDERICK A. NOBLE

Author of
"The Divine Life of Man," "Discourses on The Philippian Epistle,"
and "The Pilgrims"

HODDER & STOUGHTON
NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

Copyright, 1914,
By George H. Doran Company

NEW
4921
N742

TO THE CHERISHED MEMORY OF

Elbridge Torrey

WHO WAS A FRIEND OF GOOD MEN
A HELPER OF GOOD CAUSES
AND
A RARE TYPE OF THE STURDY SPIRITUALITY
HERE COMMENDED

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

IT is not the purpose of this book to theorize or speculate about the problems of religion, but to aid in the development of an intelligent, sincere and earnest religious life. Theories and speculations have their place, and it is an important place, but they are not all. The inner and deeper vitalities of the soul must be carefully watched and nourished and duly unfolded, if they are to continue to discharge their functions.

My own mature conviction is that there is urgent need of a more marked and dominant note in the spirituality of the day. Popular thought runs largely in other channels. Church activities are chiefly concerned with other aims. But life, if it is to be fruitful in good works for any length of time, must have roots, and the invigoration which roots convey. The most powerful engine will cool down and become a "dead" engine if suitable fuel is wanting. Streams will not continue to flow unless there are fountains, or copious distillations from the skies, to keep them in full supply. The cruse of oil has to be replenished, or it will give out. The meat furnished, even though miraculously bestowed, will carry one, not forever, but only for a limited time. Faith, love, obedience, and the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice, will not long survive the decay, or any considerable decrease of earnest longing for God, and the habitual reinforcement of strength and moral purpose found in tender and habitual communion with God. The cultivation of spirituality of the type set forth in the following pages is urged

for its own sake; for it is a precious achievement; but it is also urged in the interest of patient continuance and highest efficiency in well doing. Impulse loses its force and enthusiasm its fire in the worker who does not keep in close fellowship with Him who sends us into the vineyard. Joy in service, success in service, and fidelity unto the end in service, all turn on the question of the increasing appropriation and inworking into character of those moral and spiritual elements which make us partakers of the divine nature.

Meantime there is nothing in this world so beautiful as a spiritually illuminated soul. Neither is there anything so thoroughly convincing of the truth and reality of the faith commended to us in the gospel of Christ as a disciple of our Lord, whose face is ever aglow with the radiance caught from the divine face, and who moves up and down the ways of life clothed in the garments of righteousness, and whose walk is in the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

F. A. N.

Evanston, Ill.
Sept. 15, 1914.

CONTENTS

PAGE

An Introductory Word 7

Definition and Standard of Spirituality . . . 11

BOOK ONE

Why Spiritual Culture Is Urged 19

I. Secularizing Tendencies of the Times . . 21

II. A Robust Spirituality Needed 39

III. Education Incomplete Without Spiritual Culture 51

BOOK TWO

Marks of Spirituality 63

I. Knowledge of God 65

II. Personal Purity 73

III. Love 85

IV. Interest in the Things of the Kingdom . . 93

BOOK THREE

Aids to Spiritual Culture 105

I. High Aspirations 107

II. The Exercise of Faith 117

III. Prayer 131

IV. Reading 145

V. Reading (*Continued*) 167

VI. Meditation 193

VII. Rendering Service 211

VIII. Right Use of Sorrows and Disappointments . 235

IX. Coming Under the Power of the Spirit . . 253

X. Intimate Fellowship with Christ 271

CONTENTS

BOOK FOUR

	PAGE
FRUITS OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE	287
I. The Soul Comes to Its Own	289
II. Life Rises to Its Best	317

DEFINITION AND STANDARD OF SPIRITUALITY

"It is the supreme honor and attainment of man to be one with God in feeling, thought and purpose."

—*James Stalker.*

"To be partaker of the divine nature is a blessed reality to the Christian, without his forfeiting in the least the sense of self-identity and the glory of separate personal consciousness. To have the life hid with Christ in God; to be able triumphantly to exclaim, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'; to experience the blessedness and power of abiding in Christ, and to realize the answer to Christ's own prayer to the Father, 'that they also may be in us'—all this is the joy and hope of the Christian in a manner and to a degree utterly impossible to the Hindu, whose union with the Supreme Spirit is the loss and end of self including all those faculties which are capable of enjoyment."

—*Sir William Jones.*

"What, my soul, was thy errand here?
Was it mirth or ease,
Or heaping up dust from year to year?
'Nay, none of these.'

Speak, Soul, aright in His holy sight
Whose eye looks still
And steadily on thee through the night:
'To do his will.'"

—*John G. Whittier.*

"It will be said at once that there is something in this comparison of man with God which looks like blasphemy; because one is finite and the other infinite—man is bounded, God boundless; and to speak of resemblance and kindred between these two is to speak of resemblance and kindred between two natures essentially different. But . . . unless there be something in man's nature which truly and properly partakes of the divine nature, there could be no incarnation, and the demand for perfection would be a mockery."

—*Frederick W. Robertson.*

DEFINITION AND STANDARD OF SPIRITUALITY

IF we are to reach results of any importance, whether in the line of thought or outward activity, we must have an aim, a method, and a standard. Just here the thing which most concerns us is the right standard with which to measure what we call spirituality. This again requires a definition. What is spirituality? What is it to be spiritually minded? What is it to live the spiritual life? How may we know spirituality when we are brought in contact with it? The question may be put in many forms; and in whatever form submitted it may be answered in many ways. The thing is to get at the heart of the matter, so that we may distinguish accurately between the spurious and the genuine, or between the milk-and-water type and the rugged type; and thus have before us a clear idea of just what we are aiming at when we seek to be spiritual.

We might say that spirituality is fellowship with God. This, with fellowship properly defined as inward communion with God and outward fidelity to His requirements, each of them carried up to the point of great joy in Him and His service, would go far toward being a satisfactory answer to the general question here asked.

We might say that spirituality is likeness to Christ. Christ was the perfect illustration of spiritual mindedness and spiritual living. Were one to think as He thought—take the same views of truth and duty and the soul; were one to live as He lived—live a life unstained by sin, and full

of all wise sympathy and helpfulness; were one to maintain, as He did from first to last, the distinction between the seen and the unseen, the mortal and the immortal, the things which perish with the using and the things which abide evermore, nothing would be wanting to a full and complete spirituality.

Were one to come under the dominating power and influence of the Holy Spirit—turning the brain over to be illuminated by His teaching and by Him guided to its conclusions, yielding the will to His control, giving Him undisputed residence and free range in the heart, and permitting him to purify and inform the whole man, the result would be spirituality of a divine order. A life thus directed would be fruitful in the love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control, which are the harvests of a divinely implanted and vital godliness. No man could gainsay such a life; and no intelligent and sincere man could mistake the source of it. An indwelling Spirit both conditions and assures a sweet, consistent, and self-evidencing spirituality.

Each one of these possible formularies—fellowship with God, likeness to Christ, the indwelling of the Spirit—would furnish an unerring standard with which to measure and also to test spirituality.

Do we not, however, get an all-inclusive and final measure of spirituality in the achievement which was contemplated by Peter when he spoke of our becoming partakers of the divine nature? Are

not the fellowship with God, the likeness to Christ, the indwelling and guidance of the Holy Spirit, all bound up in this one idea and aim? Is it not, too, right in line, though the thoughts expressed in the two statements are by no means identical, but is it not right in line with the kind and degree of moral completeness which Christ had in mind when He said: "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect"? Less familiar than some of the forms of expression to which our ears have grown accustomed, can there, after all, be any statement which more accurately describes and measures genuine spirituality than the almost startling one which the Apostle used? It means an immense stride forward, an immense flight upward; but this is the standard set up for us by an Apostle, and justified by the Great Teacher.

According to this conception the spiritual life is the life which affords us share in the principles, thoughts, emotions, qualities, and aims which go to make up the moral being of God. To live this life is to open all the inlets of mind and heart to the light of God. It is to accept and walk in the truth of God. It is to be guided by the will of God. It is to be filled out of the fulness of God. It is to bring the whole man over into loyalty to God, and carry the character up into the refinement and beauty of a holiness after the pattern of the divine holiness.

Amiel has said: "There is but one thing needful—to possess God." Yes, but we possess God only when we let Him possess us. When there is

this mutual possession—He possessing us and we Him—we shall be like Him; we shall be partakers of the divine nature; for He will be in us and we shall be in Him.

This secured, love will mean the same thing to us as to Him, and our wills will lead us along the same paths as those along which His will moves. We shall magnify righteousness, and approve what God approves, and be grieved at what grieves God. The outgo of our lives will be beneficent; and we shall lend a hand as He lends an everlasting arm, and give a morsel of bread to the hungry as He gives world-wide harvests, and proffer a cup of cold water to moisten parched lips as He pours out the overflowing fulness of ten thousand crystal fountains. We shall be watchful of all signs of His presence and obedient to all intimations of His purpose. We shall be in vital and coöperative fellowship in all that He wishes to do in us and with us and through us. So far as necessary or possible we shall enter into the secrets of the Most High. "That they also may be in us—I in them and thou in me."

This does not mean that we are to blend and lose our personality in the personality of God; or that we are ever to reach a stage in our development in which it will be proper for us to say that we are God. Peter had no such thought in mind. An assumption so insane, not to say blasphemous, was left to the audacity and conceit of some of our modern inventors of startling phrases. To be in closest intimacy with the Holy Spirit is not to be the Holy Spirit. To be like

Christ, even up to the point of being able to say that for us to live is Christ, is not to be Christ. To be partaker of the divine nature is, as we have seen, to come into harmony with God in His thoughts and feelings, and in all our aims and activities to move out on the lines on which His thoughts and feelings move; but it is not to be God. God alone is God. He is evermore God, and His creatures are evermore creatures. God alone is Father. He is evermore Father, and His children are evermore children.

It remains true, nevertheless, that we can become partakers of the divine nature; and that partakership in the divine nature is at once the high-water mark of attainment and of spirituality. It is the ideal aim. No aim can be higher. It is the ideal achievement. No achievement can be loftier. We reach the utmost that is possible to us when we realize in our lives the vital oneness with God for which the Son of God prayed in the Upper Chamber. We cannot know anything better worth knowing than the truth which comes to us through intimate fellowship with God. We cannot advance into a purity of heart or hand or life surpassing the purity which must be ours if we are taken up into the currents of the divine thought and purpose. God typifies all—crowns all. To be in Him and to have Him in us is to be in the highest degree spiritual.

Having thus indicated what spirituality is, and the standard by which it is to be measured, the way is open for going on and pointing out some of the reasons why spirituality ought to be cul-

tivated, some of the signs by which a genuine spirituality will be marked, some of the means to be emphasized and methods followed in the development of spirituality, and some of the satisfactions experienced in the use of faculties trained to spiritual issues.

BOOK ONE: WHY SPIRITUAL CULTURE IS URGED

I

SECULARIZING TENDENCIES OF THE TIMES

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

—*William Wordsworth.*

"What is worldliness? Worldliness is life without ideals, life without vistas, life devoid of poetic visions. . . . It is life imprisoned within the material, no windows opening out upon ethical, moral or altruistic ends. It is the five senses without the moral sense. It is quickness to appetite and dulness to conscience."

—*J. H. Jowett.*

"There is no disputing the fact that modern progress has tended to shift the center of life's interest from the invisible to the visible world."

—*Rudolph Eucken.*

"The sentiments of our own times everywhere betray the growing encroachments of the outward upon the inward. . . . This despotism of the outward over the inward life, this suppression of every attribute not immediately wanted for business or society, is a misfortune which every noble mind will assuredly withstand."

—*James Martineau.*

"There is nothing that pains me more than the growing physicalness of the religion and worship of the modern church. The thing that man seems supremely interested in to-day so far as his religion is concerned, is the condition of his body."

—*Joseph A. Milburn.*

I

SECULARIZING TENDENCIES OF THE TIMES

IN uttering a note of warning against certain manifest evils of our day, it is neither wise nor necessary to turn pessimist and paint everything in dark colors. It is not true that everybody is wrong, that all drifts are mischievous, and that churches, states, and society in general are surely rotting to decay, or sweeping on to swift and inevitable destruction. It is easy to make wild guesses and label them deductions from facts; but when the best lives and the best deeds of any one of the so-called best periods of the past are brought forward and set down side by side with the best lives and the best deeds of the present, the inference comes of itself that there has been no preceding age in the world's history when there were so many good men and women abroad, so many promising and helpful things going on, and when the Lord's people might so well take heart and press forward in confident enthusiasm as in these opening years of the twentieth century.

But while all this may be cheerfully conceded, or rather stoutly claimed, it still admits of no question that there are many sore spots in society to be healed, many foes in full array against truth and order and the better life to be overcome, and

many moral victories to be won, before love can be said to sway in all hearts and righteousness to dominate in all actions. The morning sends its shafts of light toward the zenith; but not yet is the sun very far above the horizon. The birds sing carols in the tree-tops; and their sweet songs make us glad and hopeful of the future; but there are other voices falling on the ear with notes discordant and ominous. Bogs and fens still breed dangerous reptiles, and wild beasts with their ravening instincts haunt the forests and lurk in the mountain fastnesses. Virtues are conspicuous; so, too, are vices. If there are more virtues than there once were, it is not to be overlooked that the old vices have not disappeared nor changed their destructiveness. Men in both the lower and the upper ranks of society are busy now as of old selling birthrights for messes of pottage, and madly ruining their own souls and corrupting the streams of life with their wild dissipations. There are signs of the approach of the millennium; its high advancing banners gleam in the distance; but the hour has not struck for men to stop work, fold their hands, and join in singing the doxology.

What is the trouble? Why does not the good time coming come faster? What hinders spiritual growth and the free development of spiritual character? When there is set before us the type and possibility of a life so identified with God in His moral disposition and aims, that, if we accept and enter upon it, it may be said of us that we have

become partakers of the divine nature, why do we not hasten to make this life our own?

The answer is not difficult. Old-fashioned people, who have a forceful but blunt way of expressing their opinions, say that the hindrance is sin. New-fashioned people, who for substance wish to say the same thing, but deem it prudent to soften down the language lest it be offensive to ears polite, say it is self-will or selfishness. Others locate the obstacles to moral progress in poor judgment rather than in any inward tendency or deliberate intention to go wrong. We are further told that even the most wayward, profligate, and abandoned are struggling toward God, though some of them have an awkward and roundabout way of scoring their approaches to Him. On the whole, when all the facts are noted, it seems more rational to fall in with Moses and Isaiah, with John and James, and with the Great Teacher, and conclude that the trouble with mankind is something more radical and blameworthy than mere folly in choosing means to ends.

The object now in mind, however, does not call for a review of all the hindrances which may be named to spirituality, but for a somewhat careful consideration of the one particular hindrance which is encountered in the subtle and tremendous secularizing tendencies of the time. In yielding to these tendencies there is sin, open and flagrant; and selfishness both of the delicate and the grosser sort; and calculations which sadly miss the mark; but for the present purposes these secularizing tendencies are to be thought of, not so much from

these standpoints as in the light of their deadening influence on spiritual apprehension and growth.

These secularizing tendencies are seen in four directions; and it requires no exceptional keenness to detect them; for they obtrude themselves upon all observers.

They are seen in our treatment of Sunday. Sunday newspapers have largely displaced the Sunday morning reading of the Scriptures. In nearly all our large cities theaters are open and crowded at both the afternoon and evening entertainments on the Lord's day. Baseball games, at which there are thousands of spectators, and from which there come large receipts, are played on the Sabbath. Excursions, dinners, social festivities, automobile rides, and all sorts of gaieties make the day anything but a Sacred Day. Business men economize time by starting on their trips or returning on Sunday. Men who might be expected to be in church on Sunday evening are out to dine, or are entertaining company, or are on their way to St. Louis, or Chicago, or New York, or Washington, or San Francisco. Thousands upon thousands are kept at work on trolley lines and railroad trains to accommodate the multitudes who wish to travel here and there and everywhere on the opening day of the week.

Bear in mind that the task in hand is not a task of right interpretation. How the commandment to remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy, and how the words of Jesus when He said

that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, are to be understood and regarded are questions aside. So, too, it is a question aside whether our New England ancestors were not too strict in the observance of the Sabbath. The fact to be noted, and which now concerns us, is simply and solely the tremendous change in the direction of a secularized Sunday which has taken place, and which is still in progress, in the popular mind. Over this there can be no debate. The change has swollen to the proportion of a revolution. The old Sunday of the Pilgrims and the Puritans is gone; or it lingers only on the outer edges of our present-day life; and the Sunday of the gay capitals of Continental Europe has come in to take its place.

These secularizing tendencies are again in evidence in our schemes of education. Our leaders of learning have fallen in with the commercial drift. Instead of attempting to discipline minds by training them to habits of severe logical thinking, and filling them with seed principles and fruitful knowledge, the cry is for courses of instruction which will fit students to go right out and earn a living; and the heads of our schools have largely yielded to the demand. Something practical, something useful, is what the patrons of our educational institutions insist on; and they refuse to be satisfied with policies and methods which do not have the practical and useful immediately in view. They want skill in the everyday affairs of life,—brain and hand alike taught

to get bread and heap up dollars and cents. The idea of utility dominates. The emphasis is laid on the material side; and the aim is to make each pair of hands worth as much as possible in the industrial world. A statement has just fallen under my eye in which the superintendent of public schools in one of our large cities says: "When we can get away from teaching the child the things that are of little value to him and replace them with subjects which when mastered will in the later years of his life mean dollars and cents to him, I think the educational problem will be solved."

In nothing is this commercial drift in education more marked than in the type of persons who are now chosen to the presidencies of our colleges and universities. Formerly only ministers of recognized ability and scholarship were called to these positions. To-day the choice is more likely to fall on civilians. Lawyers, scientists of eminence, men of affairs, are sought for these places. They are sought on the ground that their teaching and influence will be more utilitarian and have in it more of the earth flavor of the common struggle for existence than would be put into it by educators of the pattern of Jonathan Edwards, Timothy Dwight, Theodore Woolsey, and Mark Hopkins. Students on graduation, so it is held, must go out stamped with an economic value.

This theory of education is popular. In many respects it may well be. There is a lot of common sense in it; and telling arguments can be brought forward in its support. It aims at prac-

tical efficiency. It seeks to secure instructed capacity for self-support, and for holding one's own in the sharp competitions of our modern life. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Whether the men turned out from our institutions of learning, imperfect as they were, under the old courses were a set of incompetents may be settled by investigation. Whether under the new system we shall get men and women more capable and better fitted to take care of themselves, with larger, broader, and finer characters, remains to be seen.

But the wisdom of the scheme is not what is now under discussion. The fact pertinent to the present point is that education, within the last few decades, has become largely secularized in its method, spirit, and aim. A knowledge of the sciences is acquired that their laws may become our hewers of wood and drawers of water. Mechanical arts are mastered in order to increase ability to make money. Mental discipline is viewed in the light of a bankable asset.

Singularly enough this same secularizing trend has a further and striking illustration in the emphasis which followers of the Master are now placing on the relief of physical need and the general betterment of physical conditions. It is not so much the souls as the bodies of men that people have in mind when they go forth to help. The gospel preached is the gospel of environment. The workers are feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, guiding the blind, sheltering the homeless, and uplifting the down-trodden. They are carry-

ing medicines to the sick, and nursing the feeble and helpless, letting fresh air into stifling rooms, cleansing up filthy back yards, and foul alleys, looking after defective drains and death-breeding cesspools, making war on tenements not fit to live in, and food not fit to eat, and workshops which are the nesting places of contagious diseases and moral defilement, and doing what they can in every way to improve surroundings.

All this is good—unutterably good. It is in line with the teaching and spirit and example of Christ. It is to the discredit of the Church that many things now done were so long left undone. Woe to us if we shut our eyes to these needs, and hold back from the relief of men who are in distress and poverty, or who are suffering under the pressure of cruel injustice.

Only—it must not be forgotten that while this kind of service is in line in part, it is not in line with the full message and mission of our Lord. Christ came into the world to purify hearts, to be inward light and life to men, and to establish a Kingdom whose organic law should be loyalty to God, and whose social characteristics should be righteousness, peace, and joy. He laid stress on a future existence, and insisted that it is a matter of measureless importance that one's name be written in heaven. In His thought, as He said both directly and by implication over and over again, no man is right till he is right with God. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."

The mistake is not in laying too much stress on either the one or the other of these duties,—

duties to the bodies and duties to the souls of men. The mistake is in setting one over against the other, and trying to belittle one at the expense of the other. Or it is in thinking that if one of these duties is fulfilled the other will take care of itself. There are two great commandments. Neither can be properly met if the other is neglected. Jesus kept both commandments in mind. He thought of the here and the hereafter. He never sought to enforce an obligation which lies within the lines of the earthly life by disparaging the life to come. We are to love God; we are to love men; and we are to go our way and do our work in the world in the consciousness of a twofold responsibility.

But the strong sweep of things is now in the earthly direction. As Dr. Milburn says, our religious activities and our worship are marked by a "growing physicalness." Our motives and our aims have to do largely with the present life and with material conditions. There are things which ought to be done; so there are things which ought not to be left undone.

The most conclusive proof, however, of these secularizing tendencies, as well as the ready explanation of some of the facts already noted, is the tremendous rush which is now on for the accumulation of wealth.

Worldliness is not something new under the sun. This is the pity and the power of it. Were it a fresh peril we might hope that people would be startled by it, and hurry to put themselves in a posture of defense against it. But eagerness for

things material is as old as the race. Property-hunger is hereditary. Lust for pleasure is an ancient habit. Ambition for power has been so engrossing, so compelling, that no means whereby it might be gained,—lies, dishonesties, thefts, frauds, feuds, conspiracies, revolts, treacheries, murders, and the most cruel and unholy wars—have been too outrageous and abhorrent to be employed. Wealth, pleasure, power,—the trinity of the religion of worldliness, have been the gods to which the generations have made sacrifices and rendered obeisance. From Eve, as she is pictured to the imagination, yonder in the garden, too readily taking the forbidden fruit from the beguiling hand of the tempter, down to the maiden millionaire here in America bartering away her womanhood for the dazzling title of duchess; from Achan, unable to resist the temptation of the wedge of gold and the goodly Babylonish garment, down to our modern experts in high finance; from Abimelech, the wholesale assassin, to Napoleon, the desolating scourge of Europe, worldliness in one form and another has been the overmastering besetment of mankind. Men have always coveted the secret of the Midas touch. If it is not otherwise now, it is to be borne in mind that it never has been otherwise. If it is in any measure otherwise now, it is so much clear improvement over the past.

But less or more, the same or modified, it is still with us, this worldliness which obscures vision, which puts mortgages on high ideals, and ties leaden weights to climbing feet. Being with us, its uniform tendency is to minimize in the popular

conception the need and value of faith in God, to pervert and benumb the common conscience, to eliminate high and fine moral qualities from character, and to reduce religion to a secondary place in the aims of men.

This seems to be a full statement of the case; but it is not. It is not enough to say that worldliness is still with us, and is still working, though in modified forms, along its old accustomed lines. Careful students of current drifts have not failed to observe that there are certain present-day influences in operation on the side of worldliness which greatly augment its power for harm. The scientific discoveries and inventions of the time have given a go-ahead impulse to industrial enterprises and wide-reaching financial schemes far beyond anything hitherto known in business circles. As everybody knows, the uniform effect of new realms disclosed and new masteries obtained over the laws and energies of nature has been to quicken the pulse of trade, broaden industrial and mercantile outlooks, open the way to novel undertakings, and accelerate speed in all the varied machinery of civilized life. From the laying bare of a new continent by Columbus till now, every marked advance in the knowledge and mysteries of the physical world has been turned to account, if not at once, yet ultimately, in mills multiplied and increased in efficiency, in more successful mining, in better means of travel and the transportation of goods, and broadened markets. This in turn has meant an inflamed desire for riches.

Still it may well be doubted, whatever conces-

sions we may be disposed to make on the point, it may well be doubted whether the spirit of commercialism, or materialism, or worldliness, call it what we will, was ever quite so subtle and pervasive, was ever domesticated in quite so many minds, was ever the controlling factor in quite so many lives, as in these recent days. With the vast increase which the past half century has brought in the facilities and chances for acquiring wealth there has been a corresponding increase in the passion for wealth.

It is no wonder. El Dorados have been brought to men's doors, and the dazzling splendor of them has kindled delirium in many brains. Eager onlookers have seen rocks smitten, and not water but oil gushing out of them; and they have made mad rushes for rods with which to duplicate the miracle. When a new invention, skilfully utilized, means a vast increase in the possession of a lucky few; when a nugget of gold gleaming in the sand, or flashing beneath the hurrying waters of the hillside stream, suggests whole pockets of the precious metal near at hand; when a vein of silver followed into the mountains, or down into the bowels of the earth, holds in it the bewildering promise of a palace furnished and adorned with royal magnificence; when a mine of copper or iron or coal or lead scientifically handled may conduct to fabulous riches, to a seat in the high places of the money kings, and to the founding of a house to vie with old aristocratic families, the alluring prospect can hardly fail to kindle the imagination of quick brained and resolute natures into a flame,

and to fill the air with floating visions of wide acres held in fee simple, and strong boxes stuffed with stocks and bonds, and the leisure and deferential regard commonly associated, in our dreams at least, with the ownership of large properties.

It is no libel on the age, it is no blind and narrow misreading of the temper of the hour, to say that at this period there is a general and unwonted absorption of the minds of men in wealth-getting, and the pursuit of the gratifications which depend on large bank accounts. All up and down the land the brightest and most ambitious are saying: "To-day or to-morrow we will go into the city, and spend a year there, and trade and get gain."

If these secularizing tendencies were confined to the mere business of hoarding, the hindrances which they present to spiritual-mindedness would not be so serious. Not so, however. Men want wealth for its own sake. They want it for the power there is in it; for the sense of superiority which it confers, and for the gratification which may be found in its lavish use.

This is where our leading society women join hands with our leading business men, and encourage them in their strenuous efforts to pile up riches. Wealth means fine dresses, travel abroad, residence at popular centers, admission into gay circles, and social high flying. It means a chance for a little success in foolish rivalries. Our Newports set the pace in free expenditures; and their millionaire sets are imitated in a descending scale all the way from New York and Washington to the latest settlements in Oklahoma. It is not

enough to have conveniences and comforts at hand; everybody must have dear-bought luxuries. Our homes must be palaces. Our dinners must be feasts. Our carriages, whether drawn by high-stepping thoroughbreds or driven by gasolene or stored-up electricity, must be chariots. The trains of our domestic attendance must outnumber the retinue of a prince. Our diamonds must outflash the dazzling splendor of the jewels which flame in the coronet of a duke. At whatever cost in money, or by whatever artifice, our young heirs and heiresses must have entrance into the selectest clubs and the most exclusive Four Hundreds. It is an open secret that these paths are lined with domestic tragedies, with most humiliating scandals, and with the ruin of nobody knows how many unsuspecting victims of intrigue and lust. Still the dance goes on, and the high merrymaking, with the same old aftermath of bitter tears and broken lives.

There is another side to this. The hot and consuming eagerness which characterizes the successful activity of our day is not without its redeeming features. It is good to work. It is good to save. The wealth which comes by honest toil, thrift and foresight, or by undertaking and successfully finishing enterprises of magnitude, like building railroads and canals, developing mines, starting vast manufacturing industries, opening new channels of commerce and trade, is an indispensable factor in the progress of civilization. All our great schemes for improving society, all our educational projects, all our benevolent activi-

ties, all our missionary movements, would come to disastrous standstill without money. The habit of giving which has now become so universal, and the princely fortunes which in these later years have been turned over to assist the aged and helpless, to support colleges, to found technical and industrial schools, to promote historical explorations and medical and scientific researches, to aid hospitals, art galleries, museums, and libraries, are silver linings in the clouds which often seem so dark and threatening. It is a great achievement to have reached a stage in the development of society in which there is such a disposition as now exists to give freely in furtherance of good causes. It is a long stride forward when a public opinion has been created in which it is counted a shame for men to be rich and not to be benevolent, and which holds the possessors of large means under obligations to be altruistic and do something to push the world forward.

Hopeful as all this is, and inconsistent as it may appear to be with any general indictment of the age on the ground of excessive materialism, it is still true that in society at large the currents set away from the things which are not seen and toward the things which are seen. Even in this matter of generous giving, so commendable and encouraging, how hard it is to get money for objects which are primarily for spiritual ends. What cries come up annually from the managers of our leading missionary societies for funds to make up deficits, or to carry the gospel into some new and promising field. There is a violent outreach-

ing for the things which can be touched, tasted, and handled. The panting of the average soul is for the water brooks for which the hart panteth and not for the cooling streams whose sources are back in the eternal fountains. What we hear is not the Macedonian cry to come over and help, but the Wall Street cry to come over and invest. Duty—duty to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and coöperate with Him in the highest and most sacred aim which brought Him into the world—is a mistress whom we airily wave aside when the clink of dollars falls on our ears, or the heights which ambition is eager to scale beckon us, or the dulcet notes of ease and pleasure salute the senses, and we go on our way as if we were bodies and not souls, earthworms and not beams shot from the Eternal Light.

All this array of facts shows clearly what pressing need there is of a program of religious life which lays definite stress on spiritual culture. In our natural inclinations and impulses worldliness has a congenial soil in which to grow. Encouraged it grows rapidly. Hence, subject as we are in our business life, in our social life, in our educational work, in our relaxations and amusements, and even in much of our activity in religious spheres, to these material influences, it is inevitable that our spirituality, unless watched and nourished, will suffer. For worldliness, in its most tolerable forms, creates an atmosphere smothering to the inner life. Our eyes become filled with the fine dust which floats about us, and we see

but dimly. We lose appetite for the bread of heaven, and have more relish for the loaves and fishes of earth. The rush and roar of the high-geared machinery everywhere in operation make us deaf to the low accents of the Master's call. Weighed down, as sooner or later we come to be, with our daily vocations, with our desires and ambitions, there is too little moral force left in us to spread wing and soar away into the upper regions of fellowship with things divine. We are flushed and bewildered by the overcharged air which the commercialism of the age pumps into our lungs, and we work too hard. Or if we turn to pleasure we spend much of our strength on objects as ephemeral as summer flies. Our spirituality becomes thin and weak. It is not alone that the type of spirituality has changed; the thing itself, to some extent at least, has disappeared in the mad scramble of the hour, and is no longer, as it once was, a vital and precious asset in the experiences of Christian believers.

This is the shortcoming of the church to-day. It is not in its lack of numbers; it is not in its want of wealth; it is not in the defective education of its members. It has numbers; it has wealth; it has schooling. The factor wanting is a deep, commanding, and all-pervading spirituality. The followers of our Lord are too few of whom it can be said that their lives are "hid with Christ in God." It is left to missionaries, to small circles of devout women, and to the exceptional men who are found here and there, to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowl-

edge of Christ Jesus. There will be power in the church when there is spirituality in the church. A worldly church is not only weak; it is an offense and a mockery. The security, and the only security against the tides of worldliness which roll in so strongly against us, is to let the divine life flow through us to such an extent that we come to know by a vital experience what it is to live and move and have our being in God.

II
A ROBUST SPIRITUALITY NEEDED

"We ought always to bear in mind that nothing will do the work of religion but religion. Piety has never been made plentiful by being made easy."

—*Joseph Henry Crooker.*

"The spiritual life is not to be viewed in any narrow or conventional sense. Sometimes, indeed, it is spoken of as if it were a type of life which could only be lived apart from the common life of men—a divine fire that needed no earthly fuel. In reality it has everything to do with our everyday life. It is our common life inspired and sublimated by the Spirit of Christ, and concerns all that concerns men."

—*William Dickie.*

"Spirituality—what is it? If we are familiar with art, we think not of some Apollo Belvidere, some Venus of Melos, some Winged Victory of Samothrace; but of the saints and angels of Fra Angelico, with their attenuated bodies, their pallid faces, their transparent hands, and rapt eyes fixed upon the uplifted crucifix. So it has become possible for us to misunderstand and even to caricature in thought and speech, what is really the finest thing in the world—Spirituality."

—*Frank Newhall White.*

"Such was . . . Cromwell . . . Firm in his belief in direct communion with God, a sovereign in power unseen, hearkening for the divine voice, his steps guided by the divine hand; yet he moved full in the world and in the life of the world."

—*John Morley.*

II

A ROBUST SPIRITUALITY NEEDED

ANOTHER reason for urging the cultivation of Spirituality is the fact that spirituality of the intelligent, healthy, vigorous sort is one of the pressing demands of our Christian life to-day. There is a notion abroad, largely inherited from the past, and hence deep-rooted in the common mind, that spirituality, if it is genuine, is inconsistent with resolute and determined purpose, with strenuous activity in behalf of good causes, and with the development of positive, aggressive character.

Beyond any question there is a service of highest value to be rendered to one's own soul by a quiet withdrawal, at stated or suitable times, from the noise and whirl of the busy distracting world into the sacred privacy of undisturbed thought and the blessed fellowship of our Lord. This will be pressed, for this is one of the methods or processes by which the inner life is nourished.

As everybody knows, there is a spirituality, or what passes for spirituality, which reaches just this hand-folded and reposeful stage and there stops. It is a goody-goody spirituality. Sometimes it seems conscious of its shortcomings and weaknesses, and sometimes it is conceited and disdainful; but it is always wanting in grit. It has

no push. Its voice is feeble. It is delicate limbed. Its muscles are flabby. It looks pale and ghostly. One misses from its face the tan of brave exposure to driving winds and fierce storms and burning suns. It wants to be in out of the rain, and to have all crevices closed against possible drafts of cold air. It shrinks from venturing abroad after dark, or going on disagreeable errands. It has small inclination for tasks which threaten to soil the hands. It is sensitive to evil; but it defends itself, or tries to, against contamination, not by working, but by hiding. It bears no scars of battle, for it never fights. It feels that this is a dreadful world to live in; at the same time it is half offended, if not horrified, at the suggestion of mending it by going down into the rough and tumble of actual everyday life. It is dainty, sentimental, yet only slightly serviceable. Its strength is to sit still and look attractive, and let others toil and moil, sow the seed and wield the sickle.

Spirituality of this sweet passive type is alike becoming and beautiful in an invalid or an aged saint. In persons standing on the border line, worn out with faithful labor, heavily burdened with infirmities, or suffering under intense pain, and longing it may be for the word of final release, an uncomplaining submissiveness is often of inestimable worth in the testimony it bears to the sustaining and comforting grace of God. Simple trust in these circumstances is often the most effective kind of doing. It becomes a channel of peace and satisfaction to the soul imme-

diately concerned, and an aid to progress in divine likeness to others.

Still this sort of spirituality does not measure up to the standard of what may be required of one in good health and in the full vigor of years. It does not go about doing good. As illustrated in many instances, it is little more than a refined selfishness.

One of the mischiefs of this view of spirituality is that, in the minds of too many onlookers, spirituality and effeminacy come to be thought of as interchangeable terms. The man, so it is said, is much in communion with God, studious of sacred lore, reverent, devout, sweet in temper, clean of habit, with an eye for the invisible and a heart eager to know all that may be known of truth; hence it is hardly reasonable to expect that he will take much interest in earthly affairs, or put forth much effort to make the outward conditions of people better. Or, it is said again, the man is full of vigor, alive in every fiber of his being with impulses to action, a born foe to depravity, injustice and iniquity, an enthusiastic champion of whatever promises to promote the general welfare of society, and withal gifted with a high order of executive ability; so in all fairness this must be accepted as a sufficient excuse for the absence of those characteristics which we are wont to associate with spiritual-mindedness. The one is too pious to be useful, and the other is too useful to be pious.

Making all allowances, however, for differences in ability, in temperament, in bringing up, in cir-

cumstances and associations, is this a necessary distinction? Are these two qualities incompatible? May not a man who has more than the average aptitude for living the spiritual life, more than the average longing for spiritual insight and culture, and who is aglow with ardent desire for a closer walk with Him who leads into green pastures and beside still waters, be also a man of affairs and lend a hand? May not a strong and aggressive man be a truly spiritual man? Surely there must be something radically wrong in our theories of the twofold relation of the soul,—its relation to God on the one hand and to humanity on the other,—if a man cannot avoid this schism in his interests and activities, and move forward with such an even step that neither duties on the divine side nor the human side shall be neglected.

But our theories are not wrong. With so many illustrious examples as history affords of the combination in a single individual of the two merits of exceptional spirituality and exceptional usefulness, it seems like denying the sun in the heavens to say that this double achievement is impossible. One has only to recall the great names of Paul and Augustine of Canterbury, John Wesley and John Eliot to establish the correctness of what is here asserted. Among the dead of these recent times we have such striking examples of deep spiritual mindedness and exceptional efficiency united in a single person as Spurgeon, Dale, Goodwin, Goodell, Andrews, Cuyler, John Hall and Cuthbert Hall. When we turn to the living the names of Thoburn of India and Grenfell of Lab-

rador flash at once into our minds. When will it be forgotten that Livingstone, whose achievements gave his mortal remains a resting place in Westminster Abbey, died on his knees?

The fact is that a religion of inward warmth and fellowship with God and a religion of helpfulness are not two but one. They belong together as root and stem; and they may be and ought to be exemplified in one and the same person. There is something wrong if they are not. About us, some in conspicuous and some in humble positions, there are men and women whose lives set forth this double achievement. They hold communion with God, and the glow on their faces reveals it; they serve God, and what they do registers progress for mankind. Inwardly and outwardly they walk with God; and in this inward and outward walking they both define and illustrate the true conception of Spirituality. They are object-lessons which show the quality of spirituality in which an unobstructed and full-orbed religion will express itself.

Monks in their cloisters and nuns in their seclusion are not adequate, much less ideal, interpreters of spirituality. Neither do we have a perfect spirituality if we leave out what monks and nuns of the genuine sort are supposed to find in their retirement from the world. Like them we must pause and think and pray. We may refresh our souls and enjoy to the full such visions as are vouchsafed when up in the mount of rare experiences; but we are not to forget the crying needs and the imperative duties there are down on the

plains and in the valleys where men are wrestling with infirmities which hamper and temptations which destroy.

Never was there another on this earth who kept in such close fellowship with God as did Jesus. He was in the Father and the Father was in Him. He was the Voice of the Father to the world. He was the Life of the Father lived out in the open presence of men. Only once, so far as is known, did He have occasion to cry out: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" That cry disclosed a depth and tenderness of intimacy with Him who is over us all and ever near to His own not to be fathomed by our grammar processes and our easy-method rubrics of criticism. He and the Father were one. But though He lived in this vital union with God He was always doing things which were of service to men. From the opening of the record of His active life to the hour of the ascension, His name stood for ministry. Not to be ministered unto, but to minister was His mission. No one was too low, no one was too far away, to be helped by Him, if only there was a willingness to receive help. He ate with publicans and sinners. He talked with women who had gone astray. He touched lepers and healed them. On the one side He was always hand in hand with God; on the other side He was always hand in hand with men. This was His pattern of spirituality. It was vital, active, robust, efficient. It was a sun in the heavens, always giving out light and heat. It was a moral force, always working for the cleansing and uplifting of humanity.

If our spirituality is to be of the type of the Master's, it must be marked by much intimacy with God, and a serviceableness that shrinks from no task, whether agreeable or disagreeable, which has promise of good in it. The spirituality which stops to pick and choose, and measures duty by the canons of inclination, convenience and taste, misses the mark. Self-denial, self-sacrifice, and the stern crucifixion of sloth and pride, are all involved in a healthy and robust spirituality.

One of the incidental benefits to the church at large of the Salvation Army has been that through its operations and methods it has imparted an element of downright sturdiness into the popular conception of the spiritual life. The same may be said of some of the settlement work in our times, and of midnight missions, as also of the many brave attempts, individual and organized, which are made to relieve the distressed, to rescue the fallen, and to restore the wayward and corrupt of whatever class and wherever found. How sharp and deep is the impression of all this made by the reading of Harold Begbie's intensely interesting and instructive book on *Twice-Born Men.* Workers who render successful service along these lines have to face conditions which are revolting to pure and cultivated minds, and to get down to the begrimed victims of dissipation and lust. If the bulk of our foreign missionaries had the shallow and squeamish piety of many who sit in the pews of our home churches, there would be occasion, no doubt, for talking about the fail-

ures of efforts made to convert the people of pagan lands.

In speaking of the great Augustine, Dr. Pusey has said that "a pious mind cannot be wanting in real delicacy." This is true. Delicacy is fostered by Christian discipline. Daintiness has its uses. Refinement in speech and manner is a worthy aim and an investment of no little power. A tender sensitiveness to whatever is true and sweet and beautiful, and a sharp shrinking from whatever is coarse and vicious and morally degrading, are traits not to be imperiled by any unnecessary contact with vice.

But some things cannot be managed with gloved hands. When bruised, sore, and mangled bodies are to receive treatment overmuch fastidiousness must be laid aside. If one thinks more of clean skirts than of relieving distress, then many of the suffering will have to forego help and endure their agony as best they can. Hospitals, mission districts in our great cities and in foreign fields, narrow tenements in blind alleys, offensive, fever-breeding sweatshops, narrow vermine-haunted quarters in stifling garrets and damp cellars, are no places for disciples whose spirituality has been nourished on what Milton calls "a continual feast of nectared sweets." Men and women who have known no tests of their consecration and pluck outside of softly cushioned seats in a fashionable church, and elegantly furnished homes, and tables spread with appetizing bounties, and life-long associations with people of educated minds and æsthetic tastes, have much to learn at the feet of

Him who turned from no one in need. The things to be done mean business. Discipleship stands for business. This business is of a kind that will not get itself done by floating off in the arms of delightful dreams into the land Elysian. There must be apostolic devotion.

When one has come under the transfiguring and energizing influence of the Son of God to such an extent that head, hand, and heart alike have been renewed, and the whole man has been turned to a life of service, we shall have a spirituality which fits the requirements of the hour. It will be tender, but rugged. It will be sweet, but forceful. It will be wise, but it will do things. It will make its mark. It will suggest, it will do more, it will compel the inference of likeness to Christ and of partakership in the divine nature.

III

EDUCATION INCOMPLETE WITHOUT SPIRITUAL CULTURE

"We cannot get permanent meaning and value for life without religious faith."

—*Henry Churchill King.*

"We must suppose God's supreme purpose in our lives is our spiritual development."

—*Borden Parker Bowne.*

"Man is not placed in the world of sense alone, but the essential root of his being is in God. It lies in the Divine Idea that all men must come to this gladdening consciousness—that the outward Finite Life may be pervaded by the Infinite and so enjoyed."

—*I. G. Fichte.*

"There is at the core of all men something which the whole world of nature, of science and of art is inadequate to fill. And this part of man is no mere adjunct of his nature, but his very, most permanent, highest self. What this inmost personality craves is sympathy with something like itself, yet high above it—a will consubstantial with our better will, yet transcending, supporting, controlling it."

—*I. G. Shairp.*

"An education in which the religious nature is ignored cannot produce the noblest type of man. The highest education must always be carried on in the light and warmth of those great truths which make our holy religion immortal. The citizen whom the Republic needs, and the leader whom the Republic must have, is the man who fears and loves God and keeps His commandments." From tablet in Williams College Chapel.

—*Henry Hopkins.*

III

EDUCATION INCOMPLETE WITHOUT SPIRITUAL CULTURE

IT is to be said further that Culture has not reached its highest point and fulfilled its loftiest mission until the faculties have been put to school on their spiritual side. We are the offspring of God. We have capacity for fellowship with God. We are set in the world for some purpose which must have its explanation in God and God's plan for us. It is simply inconceivable that we are what we are, and where we are, with no thought given to our equipment and with no end in view in our projection into life. Our existence here on this earth means something worthy of God. It is our most immediate and pressing business to find out, if we can, what this meaning is. We miss what is open to us on the divine side of our lives, and missing this miss the best and most important things possible to us, if we do not nourish and develop our spiritual nature.

As everybody knows, the word culture in the ordinary and popular use of the term does not reach far enough to include this kind of tuition. Too often culture has been set over in opposition to the object had in view in training the spiritual faculties. There are men who talk of culture as if culture were inconsistent with godliness, and

must not be looked for in its richest form in one who consents to take his place and learn his lessons at the feet of the Great Teacher.

So far, however, as a true and complete culture is concerned, is not the fact just the opposite of this? Can a culture be considered adequate which occupies itself with the hand and foot simply, even though it imparts the rarest skill and grace to every bodily movement? Or, going beyond this, can a culture which exhausts itself in disciplining the faculties which have to do with the problems of the here and now be considered all that is required to enable a man to express his life in the largest way?

For what is man? Is he merely a creature who has two hands and walks erect? Is the whole story of his career told when we say over him: "Dust thou art, to dust returnest"? Does the business of going and coming, of eating and drinking, of sowing and reaping, of buying and selling, mark the bounds of his capabilities? Does even the founding of colonies, building of cities, making laws and ruling states, exploring earth and seas, inventing wonderful instruments and devices, uncovering the secrets of the stars, formulating facts into scientific systems, painting pictures, writing immortal poems, elaborating philosophies, achieving reforms and setting civilization forward, cover all the possibilities which are in him? Are there no other tasks to challenge his powers,—no other heights to which he may climb? To ask is to answer these questions. Man is this, but more. In each human being there

are faculties which transcend those that are measured by these functions. Man is man because he has a soul—

> "That mysterious thing
> Which hath no limit from the walls of sense,
> No chill from hoary time, with pale decay
> No fellowship."

To claim, therefore, that one is cultivated simply because he has been well instructed in the use of his physical powers, or in business methods, or in the arts and sciences, or in history and literature, or in anything which leaves out the higher orders and the higher ranges of our faculties, is to advance a proposition which cannot be maintained. Culture to be ideal must take in our highest faculties, and fit us for highest services and highest fellowships and highest enjoyments. It must make us better as well as more intelligent,—better, purer, more familiar with truth, more at home with virtue, more open-eyed to all heavenly visions, as well as more competent and graceful. When the moral and spiritual elements in us are overlooked, and no pains is taken to become affluent and strong in features of character which affiliate the soul with God, there may be much mastery of fact, much knack at doing things, and much in every way agreeable and attractive; but not the highest measure of culture. A man cannot disregard the best constituents of manhood, and then be a large, full man; nor can a man refrain from cultivating the noblest faculties which he possesses and yet secure the finest culture.

The words quoted at the beginning of this chapter from the eminent men whose names are attached to these quotations are words of truth and soberness. They go down deep into the heart of the subject. It were well for coming generations could they be heeded by all who are charged with the duty of directing the studies of young minds. With tendencies what they are at the present time, and with secular influences everywhere so strong, it becomes the imperative duty of all to be watchful, and to emphasize those conceptions of education which include the careful discipline of the faculties which face heavenward and reach out after the eternal verities. No scheme of instruction can be considered complete which ignores or undervalues the training of the eye to see God, the training of the heart to love God, and the training of the will to obey God.

One of the most pathetic of the many pathetic passages in the Confessions of Augustine is that in which he acknowledges the self sacrificing spirit of his father, and yet bewails his lack of interest in the moral and spiritual education of his son. "Who did not extol my father," so he says, "for that beyond the ability of his means, he would furnish his son with all necessaries for a far journey for his studies' sake? For many far abler citizens did no such thing for their children. But yet this same father had no concern how I grew toward Thee, or how chaste I were; so that I were but copious in speech, however barren I were to thy culture, O God." He wanted this boy, the most brilliant mind of his age and one of the most

brilliant minds of all the ages, to excel in rhetoric; but he had no care for his religion nor for his morals. What a glorious compensation he had for the remissness of his father in the matchless solicitude and devotion of his mother! The father died early; but the mother never ceased to make this wayward son the burden of her soul. Until he was almost thirty, she followed him wherever he went, and in the arms of her faith and prayer bore him up unceasingly to God. This was the gladdening fruit of it all. "She bewailed me as one dead," so he affirms, "though to be awakened by Thee, carrying me forth upon the bier of her thoughts, that Thou mightest say to the son of the widow: 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise,' and he should arise, and begin to speak, and thou shouldest deliver him to his mother." Few things more tender and beautiful were ever written,—borne as one dead upon the bier of his mother's thoughts, yet in an unfaltering confidence that he would be brought to life.

But there are signs of promise in the sky. While the tendencies of the time are what they are admitted to be, strong and wide—sweeping in secular directions, there are indications here and there of reactions against those schemes of education which put all the stress on individual inclination, or on economic, social, and civic ends. Thoughtful men are coming to see that physical well-being must not be permitted to blind us to the surpassing excellence of moral and spiritual well-being. Man is better than a sheep. The green pastures and still waters which will satisfy the deepest

longings of his nature must have something in them fitted to nourish the soul. By all means let the hand be trained to earn bread; but let it never be forgotten that man shall not live by bread alone. He has other hungers. It is a sad thing to die of starvation; but there are starvations of the inner life as well as of the outer life. Aptitude and inclination ought to have some sway,—perhaps large sway, in our educational programs; but not so much that easy and pleasant courses —courses which lie along the line of least resistance—can be substituted for hard disciplinary tasks, with little or no thorough grounding in the theory and practice of ethics. There is an insistent cry for good citizens. The cry is timely and wholesome. In all our institutions of learning there ought to be systematic instruction in good citizenship; and in all creative centers of public opinion there ought to be currents of influence constantly sweeping outward to lift men to a higher appreciation of their public obligations and duties.

All this means the education of the moral sense. It means the training of the conscience. It means cultivating a quick sensitiveness to the distinction between right and wrong, and getting into the habit of standing on the side of truth and virtue. It means moving upward in moral conduct till one is in line with the will of God.

Thus we come round again to our starting point, and are prepared to say with a fresh emphasis that we were made to look up and to reach out,—to look up until we see God and to reach out until

our hand is in His hand. We have faculties which affiliate us with the unseen and eternal, and moments at least when our aspirations kindle into enthusiasm for ascending the heights where we have wider outlooks and richer experiences. We are not animal alone, nor intellectual alone; but beings with souls and akin to Him who is in all and over all. Emerson has said that we must hitch our wagons to a star. Verily. But we have not hitched our wagons to the most conspicuous and illuminating star in all the universe of shining orbs until we have hitched them to God. We never put the highest strain on our powers; never come under the loftiest motives; never ascend to the sublimest heights; never know the things best worth knowing; never have promise of realizing an ideal purity in heart and life, till we whisper that word God to our souls, and begin the struggle to apprehend Him and to let Him fill us out of His divine fullness.

Men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. To get wide outlooks we must climb. For intimacy with the most august and rewarding truths there must be preparation. Fine character is an achievement. Whatever a man's native abilities, whatever his occupations, he is not what he may be and ought to be in intelligence, in breadth of comprehension and sympathy, in fitness for service, and in capacity for refined and elevating enjoyments, unless he has had training in the upper ranges of his faculties, and has learned to see things in the light of the face of God.

We want industry and thrift, moral cleanness and self-control, uprightness in business and politics and social life, lawmakers whose hands are untainted with bribes and who are incapable of subordinating the general welfare to private interests or sinister ends,—in short, we want good citizens; but we can have them—the good citizens and all that good citizens stand for—only as men are trained on the moral side and made to see the surpassing glory of the type of character whose dominant principle is loyalty to God.

Where would the world be to-day had some of the great souls of the past consented to the mastery of their lives by utilitarian ideals and aims? Are there any fruits of materialism conceivable which Socrates might have gathered and handed down to after ages that anybody for a moment would think of weighing against the contributions which he actually made to the welfare and progress of mankind? Moses was instructed in the knowledge of the Egyptians; but he had to meditate long on higher themes, and go to school to the Burning Bush, before he could accomplish the deliverance of his race from their sad and cruel bondage. The education in higher things which Paul and John received, and which Luther, Wesley, Milton and Bunyan received, is an education that is still needed. The advancement of humanity lies along that line.

It is Channing who has said that "genius, intellect, imagination, taste and sensibility must all be baptized into religion, or they will never know, and never make known, their real glory and im-

mortal power." Brierley, too, is exactly right when he affirms that "the irreligious man . . . is going about with the best part of him unused. It is there in him, but dormant; dormant this richest portion of him, source of life, highest joys, of its most enduring strength. For never do we come to our true self till we have reached the hidden life of God." Be our training in the arts and sciences, in history and literature, in the accumulation of wealth and the management of affairs, what it may, there will be something lacking in the conditions of highest moral efficiency and supreme success until we have bent down in reverent humility before the Eternal Wisdom, and have opened our ears to the whisperings of the still small Voice, and have permitted our souls to be informed and quickened with the vitalizing and immortal truths which fell from the lips of the Son of God.

BOOK TWO: MARKS OF SPIRITUALITY

I

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

"The semi-conscious realization of the essential oneness of each life with the Divine Life is the highest of all knowledge; and to open ourselves as opportune channels for the Divine Power to work in and through us is the open door to the highest attainment and to the best there is in life."

—*Ralph Waldo Trine.*

"Virtue is an angel; but she is a blind one, and must ask of knowledge to show her the pathway that leads to her goal. . . . It is essential to our moral and spiritual development that we should have knowledge."

—*Horace Mann.*

"Knowledge gives us sight; love gives us possession. We find God by knowledge but we enjoy Him by love."

—*Stephen Charnock.*

"We must know God's will before we can do it. Knowledge is the eye to direct the foot of obedience. Some make ignorance the mother of devotion; but Christ makes ignorance the mother of error: 'Ye err not knowing the Scriptures.' There is no going to heaven blindfold."

—*Richard Watson.*

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

I

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

KNOWLEDGE is doorkeeper at the temple of spirituality. Knowledge is the food with which spirituality is fed. There may be knowledge without spirituality, and there may be spirituality where knowledge is limited, but in general there cannot be an appreciable and wholesome spirituality without knowledge. The Apostle had a keen sense of true relationships when he associated grace and knowledge with the growth which he was urging. It is the fool who is most likely to say that "there is no God." It is the man with an open eye and a positive experience, who, speaking at large, will be most prompt to avow faith in God and to walk in His ways.

There can be no assumption in saying that God wants all His earthly children to be intelligent. He has made them in His image and endowed them with rational faculties. Besides there is a twofold indication to this effect. One is found in the instinctive curiosity of the mind in virtue of which question after question is asked, and search after search is made in pursuit of a deeper understanding of things. The other is found in the challenge to the apprehending faculties which every form of nature and life presents. A healthy,

normal brain cannot look upon a pebble or a flower, upon the minutest insect or the farthest star, without desiring to know something about it. Surely we should not have been endowed with these inquiring instincts, nor should we have been placed in a world so provocative to investigation and thought, had it not been the intention of the Author of our being to make knowledge and growth in knowledge both a necessity and a reward of life.

The knowledge, however, which is at once an evidence and a condition of spirituality has to come closer than this to what is vital between man and God. There can be no reasonable doubt that God wants us to know as much as we can of His works, His laws and methods, in the great world about us. In a sense, a very important sense, we are in line with His wish, and are on our way to God, whenever in a reverent temper we master any fact in the universe. Still what God most wants is that we know Him. Only by knowing Him can we meet the requirements and show the signs of a real and pronounced spirituality. We must know Him in His self revelation to our race, in His manifestation and saving grace in Christ, in His abounding love, in His small-voice whisperings to our souls, in His overbrooding care, in the providential guidance He has given and is ever giving to our lives, in His indwelling through the Spirit, in the strength He imparts for daily service, in the immortal hopes He inspires in our souls, in the comforts He brings in hours when our human resources are few and our bur-

dens are heavy and our sufferings are sharp and painful, and in the efforts which He is making to bring us, each one of us, and all men everywhere under the power of His sweet, wise will, and into harmony with His divine purpose. It is this knowledge of Him, personal and intimate, in the various ways in which He makes His presence felt in the minds and hearts of those who love Him that is essential. "This is life eternal *that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.*"

The avenues along which God reaches us are many. Immediately following the sentence quoted from him a little back, Amiel says: "All our senses, all our powers of mind and soul, all our external resources, are so many ways of approaching God." He might have turned this about and made it still more effective by saying that all these are ways in which God approaches us. Day unto day uttereth speech, and the speech is of God. The lilies of the field, fragrant and beautiful, the skies aglow with the bright shining of innumerable stars, important discoveries and inventions, great souls working out great destinies in church and state, abiding achievements in science, literature and art, revolutions and reforms in society, are all organs through which God speaks to men and makes his presence felt. Drops of water, grains of sand, the structure of an eye, articulations of muscles, orderly movements of planets, have a divine accent in the voice with which they speak to us. For all facts of which

we can have any comprehension, if we will only let them tell their story in a way unhindered by prejudice, are witnesses for God and helps to a knowledge of God. "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things." When the truth which is embodied in nature, or rather which is written out in nature, is read, as Drummond insists it ought to be, "with the same unbiased mind, the same open eye, the same faith, the same reverence, as all other revelations," it will add just so much to our more direct knowledge of God. Nature in all her forms is a disclosure of God. The truth of nature is the truth of God.

> "There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
> The earth and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light."

But it is only when we know God in such wise that we can say, "My Lord and my God" that true spirituality begins. Here the heart comes into play. So, too, it is only when we can repeat the same words with an ever increasing earnestness and joy that we can be sure we are making progress in spirituality. He must be ours in the way of personal appropriation and fellowship,—our friend, our trust, our strength, our eternal hope. We are not going to live an intelligently devout and godly life by chance. Nor are we going to advance into a commendable measure of spiritual-mindedness by learning a whole lot about science and art, and adoring stars and flowers, and bowing in wonder at the shrine of nature. All

these things, let it be said again and still again, are helps, and sometimes very great helps, to moral and spiritual growth. It was God, however,—God received into the soul by faith, God apprehended and obeyed, that made Abraham and Moses, Isaiah and Paul, what they were. The living, personal God was in them, and they wrought in His power.

It seems marvelous, and at times presumptuous, to think of knowing God. How apart from this world He often appears to be. In how many aspects of His nature, and in how many developments of His providence is God wholly mysterious. When in any of our scientific ways we would search Him out how He eludes us. When Job had ascribed to the Most High the matchless skill and power through which he was able to "stretch out the north over empty space," to "hang the earth upon nothing," to "bind the waters in His thick clouds," to map out "the confines of light and darkness," and to "garnish the heavens by His Spirit," he felt obliged to add: "Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways; and how small a whisper do we hear of Him."

Nevertheless men are permitted to enter into the secrets of God, and to walk in His fellowship. Down through all these weary and groping ages, wherever there have been human hearts to wonder and ache, human hearts to be enlightened and cleansed and uplifted, God has been at hand, and more than ready to remove all obstructions which might be raised against Him by blind and obstinate wills. With what frequency do we meet in

the Scriptures such expressions as these—these or their equivalents: "That ye may know," "that ye might know," "that ye may know and believe and understand that I am He." It is not mere guesswork, nor an idle play of the fancy; it is sober fact that human souls may know God. They may know Him in His thought, in His will, in His companionship, and in the sweetness of His purifying and inspiring love. It is not God's fault, but our own, if we do not know Him in a clear, full and assuring experience. Recall Whittier's tender but deep-probing words:

> "Oh, Love Divine, whose constant beam
> Shines on the eyes that will not see,
> And waits to bless us, while we dream
> Thou leavest us because we turn from Thee."

We may know God. This knowledge is the first letter in the alphabet of spirituality and of likeness to God. We may know God. Knowing Him is the initial step in the ascent of the mountain of which Dante speaks when he says that at the start it is hard, but the higher one climbs the less it troubles him, until he reaches a spot, when going up is as easy and natural as going down.

The Apostle has a great passage which is especially pertinent to the point here pressed: "We . . . do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." In this intense and far reaching prayer, Paul was looking forward to the consummation which he had in mind when he uttered those other

wonderful words: "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Spirit which is the Lord." This is a spirituality which testifies to partakership in the divine nature, and makes it forevermore evident that we are in God and that God is in us.

II

PERSONAL PURITY

"Every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

—*The Apostle John.*

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

—*The Psalmist.*

"It is a good thing to be able to contribute to the world a painting like Raphael's Transfiguration, or a poem like Tennyson's In Memoriam; but a diviner contribution to the world than all these is a beautiful, stainless character."

—*Joseph J. Kolmos.*

"I remember hearing, years ago, of an old merchant who, on his deathbed, divided the results of long years of labor, some few hundreds in all, among his sons. 'It is little enough, my boys,' were almost his last words, 'but there isn't a dirty shilling in the whole of it!' His ideal had been, not to make money, but to keep clean hands."

—*Thomas Hughes.*

"He that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit in the center, and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the midday sun;
Himself is his own dungeon."

—*John Milton.*

II

PERSONAL PURITY

WHETHER man began as an animal, with the germ of a soul in him, but with only the vaguest sense of morality, and by the slow processes of evolution has reached his present position; or from the outset was both conscious of his manhood and innocent, but under the overpowering stress of temptation fell from his guiltlessness, and through these ages by the divine help has been struggling back into righteousness, it is hardly open to debate that one of his marked deficiencies has been the lack of personal purity. There are many things which separate between the soul and God and make one unlike God; but there is nothing which more emphasizes the separation and unlikeness than an impure life.

Forget it as we may, God is holy as well as good. He is the Holy One. The Temanite was employing the rhetoric of an under statement when he said: "The heavens are not clean in His sight."

Further on there will be occasion to speak of the love of God, and to show that one cannot so much as suggest similarity to God without being tenderly and helpfully loving.

The fact to be pressed here, however, is that

God is pure. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, is what the six-winged seraphim of Isaiah cried to each other. The priests had to sanctify themselves in order to serve acceptably at the altar. Is it supposable that any man is to come so near to God as to be like Him in his moral qualities without a pure heart and clean hands? The law of cleanness is written on the statute book of nature as well as on the pages of revelation. If we are to be conformed to the image of God, as He is disclosed to us in the outer world, in the better instincts and aspirations of our own souls, in the precepts of His Word, and in the person of His Son, we must be pure in aim, in taste, in habit, and in character. Purity conditions likeness; and as purity increases likeness increases.

Observe somewhat more particularly how purity advances one in preparation and fitness for partakership in the divine nature. Our Lord said: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." In John we read: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is."

In these two passages we have the reciprocal play of purity and vision. Purity clarifies the sight and extends vision. The invisible becomes visible. Vision helps to purity. Under the influence of the manifestation of God, and the yearning for a higher knowledge of Him and His ways and a finer righteousness which this manifestation will awaken in us, we move up into new and higher

degrees of moral refinement. A man can see just in the ratio in which the eye of the soul is relieved of the films of sin, and all defilements which obstruct and darken clear discernment are removed. Vision again, or any true disclosure of God, such as came to Moses in the burning bush, or to Job in the great debate, or to Isaiah in the temple, or to Peter in presence of the astonishing miracle of the Master, transforms and elevates the moral and spiritual nature, and by a kind of subtle attraction takes the soul on into likeness to the divine. It all turns, however, on the pivot of purity. If we are pure, we shall see. If we see, our vision will aid both in purifying and exalting us. Purity of heart helps to vision of God; and vision of God helps to purity of heart.

There is little need of saying, and yet there can be no harm in multiplying words on a matter so vital, that the purity through which we become assimilated in our characters to the character of God, must be of the type which is at once delicate enough to shrink from the slightest approach of sin and comprehensive enough to take in the whole man. It is the purity which is clean in heart, and clean in thought and clean in hand and clean through and through in the life. Chalmers has a searching passage in which he says: "It is not purity of action simply that we contend for; it is exalted purity of heart,—the ethereal purity of the third heavens. It is the purity which, if once settled in the heart, brings the peace, the triumph, and the untroubled serenity of heaven along with it,—I had almost said, the pride of a great moral

victory over the infirmities of an earthly and sinful nature."

Too little thought is given to the subject of personal purity. We do not stop to consider how we belittle and defeat our own souls and hinder any real spiritual progress by indulging the evil inclinations which may be in us, or which we may let into us. We are good natured and tolerant to ourselves when we ought to be severe. We let our thoughts range hither and thither without restraint. We let words drop from our mouths which are coarse and vulgar. We let the ribaldry of the saloon creep into our offices and stores. We listen to the crass and profane until we are not shocked by it. A careless touch will put a fine instrument out of tune. An inadvertent step will brush the sparkling dew drop from a rose. A story only slightly off color will dull the fine edge of our moral sensitiveness as a crude handling will dull the keen edge of a razor. The Apostle was not beating the air when he said: "Shun profane babblings."

It is just as important to the full development of the personal purity which marks and registers approaches to the divine likeness that much care be given to our associations in life. Even a plant cannot grow in a stifled, vicious air. Is it reasonable to think that a soul can thrive in a foul atmosphere? Put a man into the midst of soot, and set him at work, and will he not come out with begrimed hands and a blackened face? Send a man into a mine, and keep him there year after year, shut out from the fresh air and the sweet

wholesome sunshine, and will he not grow pale? Is the human soul, unless warmed with a tender spirit and filled with high thoughts and moved by lofty purposes, any less responsive than the body to the influence of bad environment? Just the contrary. A mind may be soiled for all time by the utterance of a passing word. A heart may have irreparable mischief done to it while a watch is ticking off a dozen seconds. The sickening and horrible scandals in which men in high business and political positions, and sometimes in sacred callings, are too often involved, might be traced back, in instances not a few, to some evil suggestion which took but a moment to flash into the mind, or to some evil impulse which, like a stroke of lightning, came and did its mischief in an instant.

We shall never be qualified to be partakers of the divine nature without purity. We shall never have an adequate purity without aiming at it, and coworking with God in all the ways in which He seeks to assist us in becoming better. Mr. Beecher has a statement which bears sharply on this point. "God's holiness," so he says, "makes it certain that He regards our holiness as the very crown of our nature, apart from which the idea which he desires to have illustrated in any man is unfulfilled. Being holy Himself, it must be, and it is, His great concern that we should attain to moral and spiritual perfection." Only through purity can we be like God. Only through purity can we ever rise to the heights to which God would exalt us.

Purity, then, personal purity, must be in evidence, if it is to be made manifest to the world that we are spiritually minded, or have made such progress in spiritual culture as will justify the inference of likeness to God. The world is often harsh and unjust in its judgments; but it has quick eyes. The man who talks glibly of his Christian experiences, and has much to say of inward peace and joy, and of the divine guidance which is granted to him, and yet is false of speech, and crooked in his business transactions, and unclean in his domestic and social relations, does not long deceive people. So, too, a life which is true and upright does not pass unobserved. Like sweet clover by the roadside in June, such a life fills the air with a subtle fragrance, and men answer to its presence with a fresh sense of delight. Other credentials may be required and are required; but if one is lacking in personal purity, and is making no effort to be cleaner and sweeter, it is simply useless to claim for him the spirituality which makes one like God. An essential sign of likeness is wanting.

There is no risk in saying that this kind of purity, independent of the advance it assures in likeness to God, is one of the crying demands of the time. Men are wanted who think so much more of building themselves up in royalty of character than they do of building themselves up in outward conditions of reputation and wealth and power that no pressure of alien forces shall be able to persuade or to push them into anything like dishonesty or meanness. Men are wanted who

feel that there is no place for them to pause until brain, hand, will, tongue, every impulse, every imagination, every aspiration, every throb of affection, and every end sought, is white with the radiant light of heaven.

John Morley, in his striking and instructive life of Voltaire, felt forced to admit that the great Frenchman of whom he was writing so appreciatively lacked "the peculiar emotion of holiness, the soul and the life alike of the words of Christ and Saint Paul." This lack he counted a "defect of character of extreme importance in a leader" committed to the task which this vigorous iconoclast had undertaken. "From this impalpable essence which magically surrounds us with the mysterious and subtle atmosphere of the unseen, changing distances and proportions, adding new faculties of sight and purpose, extinguishing the flames of disorderly passions in a flood of truly divine aspirations, we have to confess that the virtue went out in the presence of Voltaire.—He had no ear for the finer vibrations of the spiritual voice."

It all comes round then to just this—that if we wish to have the comfort and strength and symmetry of character which we are wont to associate with a pure and godly career, and if we wish to have any influence which will tell against evil and help to put a better face on affairs, we must make the cultivation of the inner life a distinct and positive aim. There will be no spirituality, least of all any spirituality which will afford comfort to our own hearts, or impress the world, un-

less there is a definite and resolute struggle to this end. Chance never took anybody forward into a high order of righteousness. Anybody can drift down Niagara. Nobody can drift up over Niagara. The fight of faith is a good fight, but it is a fight. Enemies to progress lie in ambush at every turn. Were the foes to high standards of moral living simply those which are met in the business world, or the political world, or the social world, or the world of intellectual speculation and doubt, the struggle would not be so unequal; but it is against all these combined,—all these combined and reinforced by the alien tendencies which are in our own natures, that we must carry on our wrestle. Subtle, potent, widespread, and, like the laws of gravitation, always at work, are the influences which make against high achievements in spirituality. To add to the embarrassment, men and women are content to dwell on the low levels. If, in their own judgment, which is likely to be charitable to their own shortcomings, they are about as good as others, whose failures they do not so easily overlook,—that is to say, if by leveling themselves up and leveling others down they can realize about an average standing, they are satisfied.

The spirituality, however, which is an outgrowth of personal purity and suggests divine likeness, does not take root and come to fruitage in this kind of soil. It has to be vitalized by the clear sunshine of uprightness and watered with showers of holy aspiration. The longing and the struggle to be pure as Christ is pure lie at the heart of it.

It is reached by the double process of putting off the old and putting on the new. If one is resolutely and habitually discarding the evil things of the world, and more and more coming under the influence of motives which have their springhead in the infinite love and righteousness of the Father who is in heaven, he is making progress in purity; and in this progress in purity he is ever increasing the volume of evidence that his life is hid with Christ in God. This is an unmistakable sign of the spirituality whose gravitations are all toward divine likeness.

III
LOVE

"Love is as old as man, and so Christ did not make it, but by consenting to become its object He gave it a new character and new qualities, a new function and new ends. . . . We call it by many names, but no name is equal to all its activities and attributes. It is an enthusiasm for humanity, for the redemption of the fallen, for the rightening of the wronged, for building up the ruined, for beautifying the wasted, but however named, it remains a passion to serve man for love of Christ."

—*Andrew Martin Fairbairn.*

"Love is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole round of Christian character; the Christian nature is its fullest development. And the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practice. If a man does not exercise his soul, he acquires no muscle of his soul, no strength of character, no vigor of moral fiber, no beauty of spiritual growth."

—*Henry Drummond.*

"The world remains selfish enough, but it will not accept a selfish religion."

—*W. Robertson Nicoll.*

"For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear,
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is;
And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost,
Such prize."

—*Robert Browning.*

III

LOVE

ANOTHER sign of the spirituality which takes us forward into an increasing likeness to God is love.

God is love. Love is the best translation and interpretation to us of the name of God. Men may question the soundness of some things which John Watson has said; but he is far within the bounds of a safe orthodoxy when he affirms: "Work is good, and righteousness is good, and knowledge is good; but best of all is love. All the other rooms of the soul are gathered under love. Be sure he will not fail in sacrifice who loves the Lord; his conscience will be tender that is bathed in love; and no one can know deep mysteries who does not love." It is quite out of the question for us to have any real vital fellowship with God and any substantial likeness to God as a God of love without being ourselves loving.

God is love; and His love is inexhaustible and endless. Even the most prolific and enduring tree finally ceases its blossoming and fruit-bearing and falls to the ground. The mother who, night and day through the long years, has brooded over her children, and with a wealth of tender solicitude quite beyond estimate has followed them in their growing all the way from babes in her bosom

to maturity in manhood and womanhood, is obliged at length to bring her earthly cares and sweet ministries to pause and fold her hands and fall on sleep. The sun is burning itself out with its own fierce fires; and the time is coming when it will no longer send forth heat and light to the worlds of which it is the center. But God is eternal. His love is eternal. The fountains of his love will never run dry. With the radiance of His love the moral universe will never cease to glow. The heavens may pass away with a great noise, and the elements may be dissolved, and the earth may be burned up; but the God of love abides forever and ever.

To be like God our souls must swell with emotions of love and breathe out love. We must love the Father, and we must love our fellow-men. We must work the works of love, speak the truth in love, and fulfil the law by love. Love is to be the atmosphere, the spirit and aim and method of our living. Love is the incense with which we must try to sweeten the earth, the magnifying lens which makes all smallest duties seem large and attractive, the subtle power of the heart, which, like a finer gravitation, draws men into a moral unity with God and with one another, and holds them as the stars are held in their right orbits.

Mozley has said that love in the Gospel sense is that general virtue which covers the motives; like some essence which we can hardly get at, it is not itself so much as it is the goodness of everything else in us; not a virtue so much as a substratum

of all virtues; the virtue of virtue, the goodness of goodness. It is what gives the character of acceptableness to all our actions.

The author of Ecce Homo made this contribution to our thought of love: "What the law of love and the golden rule did for mankind was to place for the first time the love of men distinctly in the list of virtues, to dissipate the exclusive prejudices of ethnic morality and to give selfishness the character of sin."

It is not down in the programs of the schools, nor in the etiquette of our exclusive social sets, nor in the rules and policies pursued by many of the most enterprising business firms, to lay such stress on love. We look in vain for this high magnifying of love in politics. Diplomacy moves on another plane. Ships are freighted and sent out to sea; foreign markets are sought; mines are opened; discoveries and inventions are utilized; and toil and fatigue are endured; but in most instances it is not love that is the motive, but gain, or pleasure, or power.

Still, was not the Apostle right in exalting love into the sublime place which he gave it? It is more than angel-tongues, more than prophecies, more than understanding of mysteries, more than mightiest faiths, and goods bestowed, and martyrdoms endured. It is that by which we are made long-suffering and kind; by which we are kept from envying and boasting and vanity and bad behavior and self-seeking and impatience and evil thinking: and by which we never fail.

Not only do we come to be like God by loving;

but we come to apprehend God in a thousand ways which else would be sealed to us. Selfishness tends to defeat and blind and shrivel. A man cannot understand so many things; cannot receive into his soul so many impulses which are quickening and ennobling; cannot answer back to so many salutations of heaven and earth and choicest human souls; cannot have unobstructed intercourse with so many facts which are exalted and inspiring; cannot be so comprehensive in thought and catholic in spirit, if he is selfish as he can if he is loving. Love is a bird, and the whole world has new meaning and beauty when she sings. Love is the open sesame into a thousand glad mysteries of heart and life.

Dr. Bacon used to say to his younger brethren in the ministry, that, if he had his life to live over again, he would be more loving. He never seemed to me to be wanting in love. On the contrary, however severe he might be in dealing with shams and iniquities on the platform, he was always exceptionally tender, patient and considerate in his daily intercourse with men. But this was the way he felt about it: he would be more loving. Love is an indispensable asset in character, a subtle but mighty incentive to service, and a means of ever widening influence. It is an avenue along which men find their sure way into the hearts of other men, and a stepping stone to the heights where God dwells.

Love is God-like. It is not simply that love suggests God, and in some remote way gives hints of likeness to Him. To love is to be like God in

substance and forth-putting of His nature. Love broadens the outlook, gives uplift, warms and quickens the pulse into helpful sympathy, and tempers the soul to fine issues. Love reads between the lines of what is written and gets new meanings out of life. How it unseals blinded eyes to both the illuminating visions and the actual conditions of the world! How it opens deaf ears and makes them sensitive to the higher music which floats in from spheres afar and also to the agonizing groans of bodies in distress and hearts bruised and sore!

Love has a mother's inventiveness, and it is always planning aid and comfort for somebody. It is love that lends a hand to the lowly and stirs altruistic impulses in the soul. It is not war alone, nor statesmanship, nor literary and artistic ability alone, nor success in discoveries and inventions alone, which confers on one an earthly immortality, but love as well. For is it not to love that some of the best of whom we have knowledge owe their fame? Had not his whole being been quickened and filled with a consuming love for men of all classes, all conditions, all races, and all climes, Samuel J. Mills never would have made his brief life one of the inspiring moral forces of these modern times. To mention his name at any of our great missionary gatherings is to sound a clarion note. To recall his name is to shame our sluggish souls into something like enthusiasm for the commanding cause of Christ. Had their bosoms never swelled with a love caught from the pulsations of the great Divine Heart, what chance

would Carey and Judson, would Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale have had of a world-wide fame and an enduring influence? Had not Mary Lyon caught the spirit of love that was in the Master, and under its holy spell yielded up her entire energy to the founding of an institution for the better education of women, she never would have been able to stretch her dead hand up out of the grave and unlock the strong box of a Chicago millionaire. Love is the modern magician. Love evermore works wonders.

"Saviour, teach me day by day,
Love's sweet lesson to obey."

There is no quality outside of purity which more clearly indicates a high measure of spirituality, and is more indicative of likeness to God, than love. Men differ in temperament and makeup, as they differ in circumstances. All men are more or less selfish at the start. But some men come into the world so constitutionally set toward selfishness, and they grow up in an atmosphere charged with so much of selfishness, that it is extremely hard for them ever to be other than selfish. But hard or easy, love must be domesticated to such a degree in one's heart, and so exemplified in spirit and aim and habit and character, that on seeing it, it is impossible not to think of the great Love, or there can be at best only a small measure of spirituality and a faint likeness to God. Without love there is no partakership in the divine nature. "Now abideth faith, hope, love —these three; but the greatest of these is love."

IV

INTEREST IN THE THINGS OF THE KINGDOM

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

—*From the 137th Psalm.*

"I will place no value on anything I have or possess except in relation to the kingdom of God."

—*David Livingstone.*

"Personal conversion means for life a personal religion, a personal trust in God, a personal debt to Christ, and a personal dedication to His cause."

—*Henry Drummond.*

"Christian morality finds its highest dignity and its constant correction in making the kingdom of God the supreme aim to which all minor aims must contribute."

—*Walter Rauschenbusch.*

"Henry Martyn had in his bosom the sacred fire of a true missionary enthusiasm, which counted all but loss that he might convert the heathen to Christ. The memory of Schwartz was in his mind; he had drunk of the spirit of David Brainerd; and the love of souls urged him on. For this cause he had crossed the sea, and he was straitened in his desire for the accomplishment of that glorious end; and he declared that being prevented from going to the heathen 'would almost break his heart.'"

—*Jesse Page.*

IV

INTEREST IN THE THINGS OF THE KINGDOM

INTEREST in the things of the Kingdom, when made a test of spirituality, assumes at once a twofold aspect. It has to do, as is of course obvious, with the measure of effort which one may be willing to put forth in the way of time, toil, means, self-denial, supplication, influence, experience, and special aptitude and skill, to make the will of God the rule of life in individuals and among the nations. It also concerns the inward attitude of the soul, the degree of eagerness, the depth of solicitude, which one may feel in regard to the progress and the final triumph of the Kingdom here on the earth.

Reserving the former branch of the subject for consideration further on, we are now to deal with the latter phase of it,—the inward attitude of the soul, the thoughts and feelings entertained toward efforts and movements which look to the glorious consummation anticipated in the prayer which Jesus put into the mouths of His disciples.

With this in view let the case be stated.

The Kingdom of God, brought in and established in the earth, is the highest conception of social progress possible to the human mind. This Kingdom holds in it the ideal of individual attainment and the perfection of society. Personal purity,

sweet homes, righteous laws, just government, the mutual helpfulness of real brotherhood, intelligence universally diffused, aspirations the loftiest which can be cherished, intimacies the most sacred and helpful, all wills moving forward in jubilant and unquestioning loyalty to the divine will, all faces turned toward the light of the divine face, and all lives expanding into more and more of the beauty and fulness of the divine life, are conceptions each and all of them, which are wrapped up in the one thought and aim of the Kingdom realized. Often, much too often, the words fall from our lips in a hurried, perfunctory way, and with little or no thought of the depth and sweep of meaning which they hold; but when in a sober and earnest mood we ask for the coming of the Kingdom, we are asking for the crowning achievement of humanity.

Follow the thought out a little further. The coming of the Kingdom is all reforms in one. It is more than Plato's Republic; more than More's Utopia; more than Jefferson's Democracy. It is the intensest longing of the best souls for the best things; it is the kindling dream of inspired poetry; it is the flaming visions of prophetic forecast; it is the shining goal toward which the farthest sighted and most devout and self sacrificing followers of the Son of Man in all the centuries have been pressing; it is the outline of the possibilities of the race, drawn by the hand of the Master and set in the radiant colors of the shining heights, flung out against the despair of a confused and wrangling world,—all these, and

whatever else is worthiest and most befitting our humanity—actualized and made the order of the day in all lives. This is what is to be anticipated from the coming of the Kingdom and the putting of its laws and spirit in effective operation,—God dwelling in all hearts and controlling in all deeds and laws and customs. It is the rule of heaven followed here on earth. It is the experience in some satisfactory measure of those who, in yonder realms of light and joy, see God face to face, foretasted by those who are yet in the body and can see only as through a glass darkly.

This is not the whole statement of the case. If there is anything clear concerning the divine interest in human affairs, and anything beyond dispute in the ends sought through the many and varied interpositions made by Him in behalf of men, it is clear and beyond dispute that God wants this program of the Kingdom carried out. This is what His self-disclosures in nature and through the minds of men mean; is what the multiplied ministries of the Spirit mean; is what the unfoldings of providence mean; is what the teaching and sacrifice of Him who died on Calvary mean,—He wants individuals—all individuals in all lands and of all races—to come into line with Him and acknowledge His Fatherhood. He wants society—society in all its constituents and branches, and in all its organizations—reconstructed and placed on a basis of love and righteousness. He wants the inhabitants of earth as well as the inhabitants of the upper spheres to be saints. He wants all character rounded into the

symmetry and completeness of the character of Him who was without sin. He wants the order which reigns in the constellations of the skies to reign in the ranks of all beings who have been made in the divine image.

Recall now the definition of spirituality which we are following,—not the only definition there is, but the one which we are following in these pages. The spiritual life is the life which affords us share in the principles, thoughts, emotions, qualities and aims which go to make up the moral being of God. Sharing in these principles, thoughts, emotions, qualities and aims, we become partakers of the divine nature. We are spiritual. We are like God. We feel as God feels. We desire what He desires. We work for what He works, and do our best to coöperate with Him in all that He is doing for the redemption and uplift of men. We weigh life in His scales, and estimate values by His standards. We keep our eyes open to all signs of His presence, and are alert to fall in with His movements. His love constrains us, and His commandments are no longer grievous. The streams of our life flow out with a constantly increasing fulness of joy in the channels which He has opened. Our first question is for the mind of God, and our fixed purpose is to do the will of God. The great assent to service, "Here am I, send me," becomes habitual in our speech. We remember who it was that said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me," and we make the words our own.

Here, then, we have three things: We have a

divine program drawn up and announced; we have assurances, varied and multiplied, that God wants this program carried out; and we have a conception, based on inspired teaching and involving an inference which it is impossible to escape, that to be like God, or partakers of the divine nature, we must want what God wants and work for what God works.

Face to face with the facts of the situations, as thus given, pointed and searching questions begin at once to flash into mind. How keen, how definite, how strong are our desires to have the will of God done in us, about us, and everywhere? To what extent do we take the divine attitude and breathe the loving spirit of the Father toward a world which is to be redeemed by sacrifice, and which can be redeemed only by sacrifice? How far, and how responsively, do our hearts beat in sympathy with His heart as the awful groans of a sinful and burdened humanity fall on the ear? With what quickness of eye do we catch the trend and scope of the divine plan for letting light in on darkened places, for winning the lost, for creating a new moral order and installing righteousness in the character and conduct of men? How prolonged and urgent are our entreaties for the triumph of the causes, one and all, which have on them the stamp of divine approval? How high rises the tide of our sympathies with those who are spending and being spent in the Master's service? How much are we inwardly influenced and constrained by motives which have their inspiration in the purpose of Him who came to seek and

to save that which was lost? How does our religious enthusiasm compare with the enthusiasm which we exhibit in our business and political affairs, and in the pursuit of social pleasures? In short, how close do the ideas and plans and aims which have shape in our minds and sway in our hearts, bring us to the mighty business of setting up the Kingdom of God in the world, and how deeply and warmly are the best powers of our souls enlisted in the same high and sacred task?

These are personal questions. They go to the heart of things. They are the keys which open the chambers which can be entered and explored only by oneself and the All-Seeing One. They pierce to the vital point of what we are and not what we seem to be. They line us up and rank us just where we belong. They are echoes of the old where-art-thou and what-art-thou questions which God through His prophets used to thrust at men. They are the probing instrument of spiritual surgery, and knives which cut to the quick. Asked intelligently and in genuine sincerity, they afford the sharpest, most radical and final tests of spirituality. Being personal questions, it goes without saying that one person cannot answer them for another; each must answer them for himself.

It is not to be overlooked nor in any wise belittled, that thoughts, words, sympathies, exuberant feelings, impulses, just as far as possible, are to be translated into deeds, else are they only simple mockeries. But streams do not rise above their fountains; and at this moment we are deal-

ing with fountains. We are uncovering the outflow of action at its source, and trying to find out whether or not there is a will in us to do,—a will to do the will of God so far as His will can be ascertained, and there is ability and opportunity to follow it. For is it not evident that there cannot be any real spiritual-mindedness without a mind given in some appreciable degree to spiritual contemplations and aims? Whether one may be able to do much, or only little, or even nothing, it is what one has it in his heart to do—what one would do if he could—which counts. The vital consideration, bear in mind, is whether one is in hearty accord with the petition that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. If the dominating thoughts of the mind, if the deepest longings of the soul, do not travel in the same direction in which the thoughts and aims of God travel, it is simply absurd to talk of fellowship with God, or of likeness to God. The decisive credential is wanting.

Introspection is no longer popular. It is better, so it is said, to turn the eye upward than inward,—a whole truth in some cases, a half truth in other cases, and no truth at all under certain conditions. Why not turn the eye in both directions? The fear is, that if there is any self-examination, there will be overmuch; and the overmuch will lead to morbidness. Yes; but instead of the overmuch why not just enough? Too much eating is bad; but just enough eating is good. Too much exercise overstrains and weakens the muscles;

well-ordered and judicious exercise contributes to health and long life.

Be all this as it may, the inward disposition and temper which are maintained toward the things of the Kingdom settle the question of one's spirituality. Questions of ability to carry out projects which may be suggested, of proper agencies, of best methods, of timeliness, of wisdom, and all that, are fairly open to discussion and differences of opinion; but when one says of any kind of work, or of any sort of an enterprise, or of any general aim and movement which carry along with them the hearty indorsement of the most intelligent and devoted Christian men and women the centuries through and the world over, that it does not interest him, that it makes no appeal either to his judgment or his conscience, that he leaves all such endeavors and undertakings to those who believe in them, he makes open disclosure of the type and measure of his spirituality. This is not to sit in judgment on other people; it is letting other people sit in judgment on themselves. Under the simple, easy test of interest in the things of the Kingdom, these men and women proclaim, as from the housetop, that they are not in line with God in the fulfillment of the aims on which the divine heart is set, and by so much are wanting in the likeness to God which is the equivalent of a high and genuine spirituality.

This would seem to be enough to say concerning interest in the things of the Kingdom as signs or tests of the measure of our spirituality,—the thought that is now under consideration. But

thinking about this interest, and how vital it is to efficiency in the service of Christ, one cannot help going a step further, and expressing the earnest wish that this interest in all of us were finer, deeper, and of a more forceful and compelling type. When we recall the language of the Psalmist, and think how his heart was burdened for Jerusalem, and how its welfare and prosperity were ever uppermost in his mind, how thin and meager seems any care we ever feel for our Zion. To how many of us is the Kingdom and the progress of the Kingdom our chief joy? When we read over the burning words of the Apostle, and discover with what a divine enthusiasm his soul was on fire for the conversion of those who were bound to him by the ties of blood, and then follow him out through the perils and hardships and trials of his great missionary tours in behalf of those who were so far from being of his kith and kin that they were the despisers of his race and of the faith which he had espoused, what shall be said of our zeal for the salvation of men and the winning of the world to Christ? Is it not a feeble testimony that we bear? Are not our sacrifices—the most of them at least—poor paltry offerings? When we try to sing "I love thy Kingdom, Lord," do not the strains often falter on our lips and turn on us in sharp rebuke?

Ah well, but we do love our Lord a little. We do want to sit at his feet and learn of Him. We do want to witness and work for the ends for which He lived and died. We do desire to be voices through which He may speak, and hands by

which He may help, and hearts whose prompt and tender sympathies shall express His sympathies. While mourning worldliness and inconsistencies, we do pray that Christ may be in us the hope of glory, and that as the years go by our lives may afford increasing evidence of the intelligent and profound interest in the things of the Kingdom which betokens a high order of spirituality, and which will lead on to more and more of likeness to God.

BOOK THREE: AIDS TO SPIRITUAL CULTURE

I

HIGH ASPIRATIONS

"Nothing is more perilous to your own salvation, more unworthy of God, or more hurtful to your ordinary happiness than being content to abide as you are."

—*François de Fénelon.*

"Unless faith in some lofty ideal infuse zest and gladness into every department of our activity, we cannot realize the highest possibilities of life."

—*Rudolph Eucken.*

"Have some positive plans and purpose of growth and stick to them. Cherish your noblest ideal. Try to live up to the best thoughts that come to you in your best mood. Even if sometimes you fall below them, return to them again and again. For if you are hospitable to their visitations they will never lose altogether their lifting and inspiring powers."

—*James B. Angell.*

"Resolved, to live with all my might while I do live.

"Resolved, to strive to my utmost every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace than I was the week before."

—*Jonathan Edwards.*

"I count not myself yet to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

—*The Apostle Paul.*

I

HIGH ASPIRATIONS

HAVING indicated what spiritual culture is, and pointed out some of the signs which reveal and testify to its presence, it is now in order to ask after the ways and means by which this spiritual culture may be acquired and carried on toward perfection.

In passing, however, it ought to be said that the observations made in the four chapters of the preceding book on the signs of spirituality, have both a backward and a forward reach. Inasmuch as they help to define and make clearer to us what is meant by spirituality, they look backward. Since the facts cited, or called for, in evidence of spirituality are also direct aids to the development of spirituality, they look forward, and might well have a place here. The signs are more than signs,—they are factors in the creation of what the signs stand for. The cultivation of a knowledge of God and His ways with us; seeking to grow in the grace of personal purity; exercising love and carrying it forward into more and more of love; and showing an ever increasing interest in the things of the kingdom, are among the very best helps open to us for making progress in the divine likeness. Hence much that has already been brought forward in evidence of the

presence of spirituality in the heart and life, must be kept in mind here, and thought of in addition to what is to follow, as important and powerful aids by which spirituality of the finest and broadest type may be produced and made our own.

Returning now to the line of thought immediately in hand, it is to be said that the indispensable factor in the development of a high order of spirituality is an intelligent and earnest purpose looking to this end. This purpose must be a living pulse in the soul. Other suggestions to be made will be of no avail unless this condition is first met. Without an aim as clear and definite as was Paul's when he said, "This one thing I do," we shall make no progress in developing what is best in us, and in linking this best with what is best in the universe. There is no novelty in this idea; but it is simply useless to go on with announcements of methods and discussions of means until it has been settled by each individual for himself, and once for all, that he wants to be like God, and is prepared to do his utmost to achieve this result. There must be in the quest the eagerness and singleness of purpose which characterized the man who sold all he had that he might buy the field in which the treasure was hidden. As Lowell puts it: "Not failure, but low aim is crime."

As has been said in another connection, aimless drifting will never do anything for us but harm. People drift evilward; but they do not drift Godward. When men launch out on the waters and let the currents bear them where they will, it is

toward wide-mouthed Mexican gulfs that they float, or appalling Niagara chasms, or rock-bound Labrador coasts, or Norway maelstroms which, though they may be myths in the physical world, are yet not myths in the moral world. It is easy to go down; nobody goes up without effort. To ascend one must spread wings and beat the air. It is natural for an eagle to soar; but an eagle content to remain always in its nest would never mount into the fellowship of the stars. Vice may be and often is a quick attainment; but virtue costs—costs time and labor and not unfrequently struggles the most terrific. Material gains are sometimes inherited, sometimes stumbled upon, sometimes secured by a happy chance; godliness never. Godliness is a victory for which one has to fight with an unyielding persistency. In the gray of that May morning when Dewey pushed his ships into Manila Bay and destroyed the enemy's fleet and added a new name to the roll of the world's naval heroes, he succeeded because he had an intelligent and fixed purpose to secure this result, and meant to do his best to bring it about. Bismarck, using diplomacy, war, and a fertile statecraft to accomplish his scheme, succeeded in unifying German sentiment and consolidating separate German states and provinces into the great German Empire, because this was the dominating dream of his life and the one end to which he devoted his vast resources of thought and action. With an aim as clear and with a determination as resolute as those which characterized Dewey in his naval conflict and Bismarck in his empire-building

are men to set themselves to the holy task of achieving the qualities which will invest them with partakership in the divine nature. Not otherwise will this likeness ever be won.

The difficulty with not a few people is that they are too much inclined to rest in old experiences, and to be content with the progress already registered. Their minds were once opened to receive Christ; they came under the quickening power of the Spirit; they owned their faith before men and entered into the fellowship of the church. They lived tolerably consistent lives; they had a testimony to bear and bore it; they took their fair share of the common burdens, and were not without a measure of genuine joy in the Lord. But in the course of time there was a change. The blue sky became leaden and dull. There was an abatement of enthusiasm, and the currents of zeal ran low. Doubts, uncertainties, confusion, crept into their minds, and they were no longer sure of the faith which they once held. They ran well for a time; but after a while they stopped running and stood still. They did not give up everything; but they lost heart, and no longer pressed forward into a union increasingly vital and fruitful with the Son of God.

The simple fact is that no man ever had such a religious experience that he could afford to fall back on it and call it enough. If one has had only a shallow experience he ought not to be satisfied. If one has had a rich and deep experience he will surely wish to repeat it. Be it never so deep and rich, however, no one experience, no mul-

tiplication of experiences, can exhaust the possibilities of knowledge and comfort and strength and grace to be found in God. Nor has God ever been willing to let men rest in present attainments in divine things. The ringing watchword of both Old Testament and New is—forward, ever forward. Forgetting the things which are behind, save the inspiration and guidance which are in them, and pushing on to the things which are before, is the bugle note which falls on the ears of all who march in the ranks of the great Captain of our salvation.

Jacob had his dream-vision at Bethel. He saw the ladder with its foot resting upon the earth and its top reaching to heaven, and angels ascending and descending upon it; and he heard the voice of the Lord declaring his lordship and making his promises. It was a wonderful revelation; it had in it a mighty transforming power. The man was awed by it; uplifted, enriched and set forward. But this was not enough. This was only the beginning. He must have many another experience, and above all his night-long wrestle at Jabbok, before he could come into the further blessing God had in store for him. It was so all the way through,—new experiences, new light, new training for the uses to which God was to put him.

Moses saw the angel of the Lord in the burning bush at Horeb. Speaking to him through that tongue of flame, God gave him his commission, and sent him forth, assured and strengthened by one of the most exceptional experiences on record,

to do his great work of emancipating an oppressed race. But this was not the end. The designated leader and lawgiver was not permitted to stop here. Indeed he could not have stopped here and been leader and lawgiver. He must know more of God and have more of God's help before he could do all he had to do. He must go on,—go on through many an intervening experience of mental illumination and reënforcement of will—from burning-bush to Sinai, if his life was to be made a turning point in the history of mankind and a measureless moral force in the progress of civilization. Great souls often get their start through a single experience,—some sharp and startling impact of the divine upon the human—but they do not realize their high destiny and fulfil their mission without repeated and progressive experiences of God.

Saul, the bitter persecuter, who was to become Paul, the matchless apostle, had an experience of the grace of God in Christ there at the gate of Damascus which was unique. A sudden flash of light out of heaven blinded and overwhelmed him; and a voice pleadingly rebuked and then instructed and encouraged him. His associates stood speechless, while all the world has been talking about it ever since. But that was only an initial experience. That experience made the fierce opponent of Jesus a believer in Jesus, and entrenched him in a faith from which he could never be dislodged. Still, Paul never could have been the effective preacher that he was; he never could have been the model and inspiring missionary that he came

to be; he never could have written those matchless letters, had he not had further experiences of the same grace of God which first called him from darkness to light. Over and over again he was enriched in Christ; enlarged in Christ; and advanced from stage to stage in the knowledge of Christ, until, looking back, he could say that he had had visions and revelations which it was simply impossible to put into speech.

Sitting in a car, late one afternoon of a July day a number of years ago, and slowly ascending from the base to the summit of Mount Washington, a friend who had a seat beside me, turning an eye westward over an ever broadening landscape, and taking in the banks of clouds which were resting in billowy grandeur not far above the horizon and reflecting an exceptional splendor from the setting sun, after a long silence suddenly exclaimed: "From glory to glory!" That expressed it.

It also expresses the great apostle's experiences. He was led on and he reached out. It was from knowledge to deeper knowledge. It was from vision to clearer vision. It was from intimacy to closer intimacy. It was from glory to glory.

But when we pause for a moment to think what it is, does it not seem a thousand times worth while to turn all the energies of the mind and bend all the powers of the will toward the realization of an end so exalted as this of likeness to God? Here is a fruit, sweet and rich, hanging on the boughs over our heads,—shall we make no effort to harvest and enjoy it? Here is a height look-

ing down upon us and beckoning us upward with its supernal splendor,—shall we refuse to climb its rugged sides and stand on its towering summits and breathe the tonic of its pure air and behold its outlying glories, because the achievement calls for a determined concentration of purpose and a vigorous forthputting of all our strength?

In other spheres men do not hesitate to do exactly what is here indicated to make themselves winners in the struggle. Scholars standing on the thresholds of their careers and full of eagerness to make good their dreams; artists who feel the enthusiasm of the creative impulse stirring within them, but who are not yet masters of the skill required to sing their songs or paint their pictures or chisel their statues, do not expect to transform their ideals into facts without years upon years given to the hardest kind of hard work. These scholars and artists know what they want and they go about it with a will. Genius is a law unto itself, and even though often eccentric and wayward, it may win lasting triumphs. But what genius was ever so transcendent that it was not helped by having a definite aim and sticking to it from first to last? Was it Rembrandt? Was it Thorwaldsen? Was it Michael Angelo or Christopher Wren? Was it Garrick or Irving? Was it Virgil or Chaucer or Milton or even Shakespeare? Was it any one of the great orators of the world, or the great explorers, or the great inventors, or the great reformers?

Tragedies awaken a pathetic interest and seize on the imagination with a tenacious grasp because

they are tragedies. How we all mourn over a great Might-Have-Been! The warm tenderness with which men everywhere have taken Burns into their hearts is the highest tribute to his rare gifts. Had the author of *The Cotter's Saturday Night,* up there amidst the heather and the tarns and the frowning crags and the grazing flocks of dear old Scotland, only kept himself as steady to one dominating purpose, and as clean, as did the author of *In Memoriam* from the hour of the dawning consciousness of his poetic capacities to the hour of his death on the Isle of Wight, how much worthier would have been the offering laid by this choice soul of Ayrshire on the altar of letters, and how much more lofty the things for which his life would have stood! The qualities wanting were first of all a high moral purpose, and then unswerving fidelity to this purpose.

True in all other departments of life, it is eminently true in the sphere of spiritual attainments, that there can be no ascent from height to height, no advance from victory to victory, without a fixed intention and a steady endeavor to accomplish these things. Here the aim contemplated, be it remembered, is partakership in the divine nature. Simply to state the case is to settle it that there is nothing open to one who would be like God,—like Him in His love and purity and aim and character—but to go straight at the business of cultivating this likeness and keeping at it to the end.

This is the way Jonathan Edwards grew into one of the most spiritual-minded men who ever lived. Recall the two of his resolutions quoted

in part at the head of this chapter. One concerned the study of the Scriptures. He was "to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently," that he could plainly perceive himself to be growing in the knowledge of them. The other had to do with his general progress in religion. He was "to strive" to his utmost every week to be brought higher in religion, and "to a higher exercise of grace" than he had experienced the week before. This was simply the plan of the Great Apostle over again,—a definite goal and a desperate run to win it. At no stage in his life did either Paul or Edwards count himself to have apprehended the fulness of Christ, or to have mastered all the possibilities of likeness to the divine Exemplar. It was always a stretching forward to the things which were before. So it must be; for this is the secret of every devout life, of every saintly character. It is seeing clearly what one may be and ought to be, and then using all available resources and straining every nerve to transform the vision into reality. So, as Wordsworth sings:

"In dignity of being we ascend."

II

BY THE EXERCISE OF FAITH

"According to your faith be it unto thee."

—*Jesus.*

"The experience of the passing years clinches in my mind ever more firmly the conviction that nothing succeeds in transforming the individual life like faith."

—*Wilfred T. Grenfell.*

"Faith is better than genius. Faith is better than brilliant gifts. Faith is better than large acquirements. The poet's imagination, the philosopher's calm reasoning, the orator's tongue of fire, even the inspiration of men that may have their lips touched to proclaim God to their brethren, are all less than the bond of living trust that knits a soul to Jesus Christ."

—*John Watson.*

"Faith transcends imagination itself, not merely in the reality but also in the splendor and attraction of its objects. Imagination never soars so high as the faith of the humblest disciple of Jesus is able to soar every day and every hour. As it is written: 'Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,' belong to his daily experiences."

—*George L. Prentiss.*

"These things of the Spirit are the great realities. The existence of that world in which our higher nature dwells and from which we draw our inspiration is not a matter of conjecture. Herbert Spencer himself, the great agnostic, declares that we are more sure of the Unknown Reality, out of which all physical forces and laws proceed, than we are of our own existence. It is with these realities of the unseen realm that our faith makes us acquainted."

—*Washington Gladden.*

II

BY THE EXERCISE OF FAITH

WE never get far into things without faith. Were we in any sphere to walk only so far as we can walk by sight we should take short journeys. Knowledge is of things we see; but even of the things we see our knowledge is not exhaustive. We know and can know only in part. It is easy to uncover the roots of a tree; but who can explain the marvelous cunning with which these roots suck out of the soil and carefully distribute to trunk and limb, to bark and pith, to leaf and flower and swelling fruit, exactly the nourishment each needs in order to fulfill its function? Any well man can swing his arm; but what psychologist has wit enough to wrest the secret from its hiding place and tell us how the will can make connection with nerve and muscle and force them to do its bidding?

Our objective point, let it be said again, is partakership in the divine nature. Start where we will, make our approaches along whatever lines we may, this is the end we seek—likeness to God.

But how does faith help us? How are we set forward in the spiritual culture which makes us like God, or sharers in the thoughts and feelings and wishes of God, by the exercise of faith?

First of all, faith makes God a living verity

to our souls. To get on in likeness to God, we need, we must have, a clear, positive and abiding conviction that God is, and that He is in such a sense that we can know Him and have fellowship with Him. If He is simply a may-be, a vague conjecture, an interrogation point to which we can say yes or no as we are moved by the whim of the moment, we might as well attempt to assimilate ourselves to the vanishing mist of the morning, or the retreating shadow of a will-o'-the-wisp, as to try to conform our moral natures to the moral nature of God. It is not enough that He be an energy, a force, a law; He must be a Person, rational, approachable, loving, and so related to His creatures who know themselves to be persons, that they can hold personal intercourse with Him and learn His will.

This divine Personality, rational, approachable, loving, is the God with whom we are made acquainted by the exercise of faith. He is a God who has an eye to see, an ear to hear, an outstretched hand, and a compassionate heart. He is a God from whose lips lessons of the deepest conceivable import can be learned, and with whom it is possible for finite creatures here on the earth to talk and walk, and from whom they can receive the measure of light and grace and strength and persistency necessary for the right discharge of their daily tasks. He is a Father—God,—the God who has come into revelation in the life and teaching and atoning sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ, and who in the tender fulness of a great divine

love pleads with the burdened and wayward to become His trusting and obedient children.

The reasoning faculties, working along the lines of philosophy, science, and logic, help us to an apprehension of God, and also serve to confirm us in our belief in God when He has once become a fixed fact in our creed; but it is faith which pioneers the way to God, brings Him into the soul, and make Him a living reality in our inmost experience. Paul knew Him whom he had believed; and he know Him because he had believed. The man of philosophy, science, and logic talks about God, and he infers God from a thousand premises; the man of faith lifts his eyes to the heavens and he sees God; opens the windows of his spiritual nature to God, as the windows of a chamber are opened to the morning freshness and beauty, and beams of celestial light shine in, and God becomes a conviction,—a vital, throbbing, and self-demonstrated truth.

It is not the function of faith to displace reason, nor to substitute the unreasonable for the reasonable; but to illuminate and exalt reason. Faith is the giving of substance to the things which are hoped for, and the proving of things not seen. Faith is the dream which erects ladders between the earth and the heavens, and places God at the top of them and crowds their rounds with ascending and descending angels. It is not a delusion, a wild hallucination, but a sober fact that God comes near to men who believe in Him and wish to have Him near. Call Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, or David to the stand,—call John or

Paul,—call Augustine, Bernard or Thomas à Kempis,—call Bunyon, Edwards, Rutherford, Finney, Nettleton, Spurgeon, Brand of Oberlin,—call Madame Guyon, Mary Lyon, Mary Moffat, Livingstone, and examine and cross-examine them, and see what will be their answers to the question concerning the efficiency of faith in bringing God into the soul and making Him a reality in human experience. Is it at all conceivable that any one of these, or any one of the millions of others who have walked in faith and through faith entered into the promises and are now saints in light, could have been persuaded to surrender the assurance that God was made real to them by their faith, and that in all which had to do with their relations to God it was unto them according to their faith?

Again faith clothes God with a wonderful attractiveness. The moment one begins in downright earnest to believe in God, the inclinations of the soul set toward God. Faith kindles new aspirations for purity of heart and intensifies one's moral vigor. To the believer, the command to be holy because God is holy lays hold with a fresh grip on the conscience and carries with it the ever increasing motive power of a sweet reasonableness. The things which are unlike God become to him distasteful and offensive; the things which are like God awaken enthusiasm in their pursuit and nerve to keener endeavor in the attainment of them. Faith recreates our ideals of aim and character and puts us on the stretch for higher attainments in knowledge and righteousness. The genu-

ine believer wants to be better—wants to grow,—to be evermore better and larger.

Near the close of his second visit home, Livingstone made this entry in his journal: "To-morrow, Communion in Kirk. The Lord strip off all imperfections, wash away all guilt, breathe love and goodness through all my nature, and make His image shine out from my soul." Here it is—Paul over again—putting off the old and putting on the new, never content with present attainments, never willing to rest in any likeness to God already achieved. It is the universal passion of men who come into faith in God to wish to be more like God.

This is a service of faith which is too little appreciated. The value of faith in opening the way into the Christian life in hours of emergency, in reaching out for help in times of temptation and sorrow, and in fitting one for undertaking tasks which are difficult and apparently impossible, is everywhere recognized. He is made our salvation by faith, and is a very present help in trouble, so we are all quick to say; and men are urged to confide in His promises, to make Him their shelter in storms, their refuge when pursued, their defense when assailed, their guide when the night grows dark and the way is obscure and treacherous, and their burden-bearer when the strains and responsibilities of life become too much for human endurance. Not so much is said, however, about the utility of faith when the thought is of building up the inward life and molding the character after the pattern set for us in the Perfect Man.

Clear views of what is desirable, knowledge of one's own disposition and tendencies, firm and determined purposes to get on, and many other equally indispensable aids are suggested; at the same time little attention is given to the part which faith plays in these worthiest of struggles.

To believe in God after any vital fashion is not only to have suitable apprehensions of Him in His being and attributes and character; it is to feel the kindlings and drawings of a controlling desire to be like God. One wants to be moved with the feelings which move Him, to be clothed in garments of light, to shine with the radiant beauty of holiness, and to be continually advancing in fitness to enter into His thoughts and plans and to hold fellowship with Him. Belief in God starts a longing in the soul for God which only God—God in us—can satisfy. It creates a hunger for God which only God—God made a part of our inmost being—can appease. It is not alone the things that He can do for us which makes us cry out for God; it is what He can be to us. We crave Him—His indwelling, His companionship, and the joy and inspiration of His abiding presence. How this thought, sometimes in one form and sometimes in another, fills the great devout souls whose outbreathings are echoed to us in the Scriptures: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." "My soul followeth hard after Thee." In moments when men have the deepest convictions of need, and when desire in them mounts to the highest point it ever reaches, the cry of the soul is for God. There is no lack of peti-

tions for help; no lack of acknowledgments of dependence and indebtedness; but in the heart of Prophets, Psalmists, and Apostles alike there is a constant yearning for God. However Job may be interpreted, substantial fact, or a dramatic representation of experience founded on fact, it is evident that his temporary bewilderment and distress grew out of his inability to find God. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" He wanted God that he might get his case before Him. When he found God, and came to see Him with his own eyes as in open vision, then he wanted something else. He wanted to be washed and cleansed that he might have some fitness to stand in the presence of the divine Purity. Faith is a mighty convicting and reforming agency. This is but a repetition of what Dr. Grenfell says: "Nothing succeeds in transforming the individual life like faith." Get a living faith in the living God into any man, and he begins straightway to see his sins in a new light, to repent of his transgressions, to grieve over his unworthiness, and to struggle with a fresh earnestness to come into likeness to God, and so into more fitness for intimacy with Him.

It is, moreover, one of the high offices of faith in God to bridge the chasm between the material and the spiritual, and to hold the soul close to the realities which are unseen and eternal.

Of course all this is implied in the apprehension of God which a vital faith installs in the mind. God is the key-fact, the all-explaining fact, and the most quickening and inspiring fact in the universe. No sooner do we see things in the light

of the bright shining of the divine face than we begin to see more things than we ever saw before, and all things in new aspects. To believe in God is to introduce and carry along with one a well-defined distinction between the material and the spiritual, and to multiply the tokens of the imminence and activity of Him in whom we all live and move and have our being.

All this, however, is something to be emphasized in itself. Faith in God is apocalyptic; it is a revelation of secrets and a disclosure of mysteries. Faith widens a man's outlook, lifts life to higher levels, and stamps things divine with a new and enduring value. It magnifies and elevates, it broadens and refines our whole being. It brings about more than the vague "sea change into something rich and strange," of which Ariel sings. It shifts the point of view, exalts our conceptions of things near and afar, quickens and purifies our aspirations, unlocks the doors of bondaged faculties and energies and gives them encouragement and free scope. "Behold I make all things new." Faith clarifies and extends our vision, puts us in new relations to life and the ends of life; and when we come into this illuminating experience we find ourselves moving about in a world never before realized. In the language of a line in Keats, "new planets swim into our ken"; and old planets beam with a new light and glow with a new splendor. We have experience of what Wordsworth calls "faith sublimed to ecstasy." There is a new wealth of meaning in everything, —in stars and flowers, in swelling seas and run-

ning brooks, in the laws and activities of nature, in the capacities and high achievements of the human mind, in the movements of history and in current events; for God in things—even what we call the least—makes them significant and large.

There is a wonderfully expansive power in faith. Through faith we climb out of our murky environment, and reach tablelands where the air is clear and the stars shine and the range of vision is wide. Moses saw God in the burning bush, and he kept on seeing Him. This was the secret of his large plans and of his endurance. When the baffled king of Syria sent to Dothan to arrest the prophet who had laid open all his strategy, and thwarted all his plans, and had invested the city with a host of his soldiers, and the servant of the Man of God was frightened, Elisha simply asked God to open his eyes, and when his eyes were opened the young man saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire. It was the illumination of faith which gave the vision. Elisha saw all the time because he believed, and knew with what defenses the city was encompassed. The young man knew when he came into the fresh and higher relations with God which faith insures.

It is not poetry merely, it is not wild conjecture alone, but fact abundantly certified to many experiences that through the right use of the faith faculty "authentic tidings of invisible things" do reach the human soul, and men come to know realities of highest import which else must have remained unknown. It was some thought of this

sort which was in the mind of Wordsworth when he wrote of the "curious child" with ear applied to "the convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell," from which "sonorous cadences" were heard which testified to a mysterious union existing between the shell and its distant native sea.

> "Even such a shell the universe itself
> Is to the ear of faith."

It is not merely that men who believe fall back on God and gather confidence and strength from their trust in Him; but they see things. They see things afar and they see things in the heart of them. This is one of the reasons why true prophets have often had such a hard time in the world, —they could see what men of small faith could not see; and hence they were out of harmony with current views and aims. Faith has in it a transfiguring power. It is a new sun in a new heaven. "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" Whether we all of us have such illuminated moments or not, it is certain that in every generation there are some who have more than a faint and passing glimpse of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory of which the apostle spoke. Faith is a microscope which enlarges the things at which we look. It is a telescope and brings distant things near. This is doubtless what Dr. Watson meant when he said that faith is better than genius, better than brilliant gifts, better than large acquirements. The inspiration of it pushes back our intellectual and spiritual boundary lines; and

equips the soul with new eyes, new ears, and new sensibilities, for all that is highest and holiest. This is what Dr. Prentiss meant when he said that faith transcends imagination. It is the wings on which one soars into the presence of the Most High. "It has been said," so one of our writers affirms, "that sometimes the dullest wight is a Shakespeare in his dreams. Not merely in his dreams, but also in his waking thoughts, the plainest saint may at times be attired with sudden brightness like a man inspired."

When we think of the transforming and idealizing power of faith, and what it does to spiritualize the soul and bring one into the likeness and fellowship of God, we can well understand why Jesus was always saying "Believe"—"Believe"; and why the disciples, under the teaching and in presence of the signs and wonders of our Lord, exclaimed: "Increase our faith."

III
PRAYER

"He departed into the mountain to pray."

—*Mark.*

"Lord teach us to pray."

—*One of the Disciples.*

"When thou prayest enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray to the Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee."

—*Jesus.*

"The injunction to enter into the closet and pray to the Father who is in secret is as central and as fundamental as the command to love one's neighbors as one's self."

—*The Biblical World.*

"We pray as our Lord prayeth, and as He teacheth us to pray. God giveth and forgiveth without the asking; but the children ask . . . especially for His spiritual gift of eternal life."

—*Henry M. Alden.*

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of—
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

"Try to take an attitude toward God, not of forced intercourse, such as you maintain with persons toward whom you stand on ceremony and address in a mere complimentary fashion, but as you observe toward a dear friend with whom you are under no restraint, and who is under none with you."

—*François de Fénelon.*

III

PRAYER

THERE is no aspect of Spiritual Culture, or the development and training of our faculties in the direction which will make us partakers of the divine nature, in which prayer does not hold a conspicuous place. Prayer is essential to moral and religious growth. If any man has ever succeeded in becoming fine-fibered on the spiritual side of him, or in attaining to any marked degree the ideal of conformity to God to which we are urged in the Scriptures, without prayer, his name and the circumstances of his life have quite escaped the writers of biography.

It is not to be denied that there are many perplexing questions connected with the subject of prayer. These are not now to be discussed. On the contrary, that there is a margin for prayer in the economy of life, and that prayer offered in the right spirit and for right ends reaches the divine ear, and comes back laden with comfort and guidance and strength and manifold blessings, are matters taken for granted.

Milton has stated the case, as it lies in the mind of the average believer, with an impressive accuracy in the words which he put into the mouth of Adam, and which Adam, for her encouragement, addressed to Eve when, under the fiat of

expulsion, they were both to go forth from the Garden:

> "Easily may faith admit that all
> The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends;
> But that from us aught should ascend to Heaven
> So prevalent as to concern the mind
> Of God high-blest, or to incline His will,
> Hard to believe may seem. Yet this will prayer,
> Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
> Even to the seat of God."

Moreover, the great poet makes the father of mankind say this on the basis of his recent experience in coming to God.

> "For, since I sought
> By prayer the offended Deity to appease,
> Kneeled and before Him humbled all my heart,
> Methought I saw Him placable and mild,
> Bending His ear; persuasion in me grew
> That I was heard with favour; peace returned
> Home to my breast."

Along with peace there came other joys and helps and hopes into his soul. He prayed; he believed in the propriety and efficacy of prayer, so Milton did not hesitate to affirm in his portrayal of him at that stage of his career; but his confidence in prayer grew out of his own sense of the need of prayer, and of what had come into his life in answer to prayer. He found it good to pray; and there seemed to him to be no call for further proof of its fitness.

In its general features prayer is either adora

tion, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or communion.

To adore is to worship God. It is the tribute of the soul to His divine perfections. It is to feel for Him the highest regard and the profoundest reverence it is possible for us to feel toward any being or object. Can it be otherwise than that one in such a state of mind as this will want to press likeness to God and intimacy with God to the utmost bound?

To confess is to move in the same direction. In what light does sin ever seem so exceedingly sinful; so out of place in our thought and action, and in every way so offensive and mischievous, as when we take it before God and acknowledge it frankly to Him? How ugly it looks, how hateful, held up there, while with aching heart and stammering tongue we try to syllable off the story of it in all its repulsive details and say: This is the bad suggestion, or the bad desire, or the bad word, or the bad deed, of which we are guilty. It is like coming under the surgeon's knife with no anæsthetic to render the quivering flesh insensible. It must have blistered David's hands and made them smart to the bone to climb up round by round from the awful depths into which adultery had plunged his soul to the top of the ladder of that Fifty-first Psalm. But he felt new life throbbing in all his veins, and he could stand erect once more, when he had made a clean breast of his iniquity and had had it all out with God. Confession of wrong, whether in feeling or action, is highway to God; and it helps into likeness to God.

To go to God in the spirit of a grateful recognition of His wonderful goodness, and to express thanks to Him for His multiplied mercies and loving kindnesses, are acts sure to make us feel more and more earnestly the desirableness of being like Him in these outgoings of a benevolent disposition. The simple fact is, we cannot think of God's goodness in an appreciative way without feeling how fine a thing it would be to have some of that goodness in our own hearts. If it be a glorious thing in Him to be a generous Giver; even the Giver of every good and perfect gift—it would also be a glorious thing in us to be generous givers. It may be doubted, indeed, whether any man ever sincerely thanks God for a mercy, unless the thanks be pitched to the key of a desire to love God better and to be more like Him because of the mercy. To thank God truly is to approach God more closely.

To supplicate is to ask God for favors. It is to plead with Him for what we want. It is to cry unto Him in distress, and when temptations beset, and bitter foes assail, and heavy burdens weigh us down. It is to stretch out empty hands to be filled, and to open hearts, which have become chambers of foul imagery and defiled by all sorts of sinning, to be cleansed. It is to beseech the divine aid in getting into right relations with Him to whom we are responsible for our deeds and our character. Who can do this with any sincerity or success without being set forward, not only in the desire to be like God, but in the achievement of this likeness?

To commune with God is to talk with Him in the sweet interplay of a blessed fellowship. It is to give and receive; to blend the life with His life; to come under the inspiring and purifying influence of His thought; to get into the current of His will and move along as the stream carries us; and to be responsive to the quickening breath of His mind as it touches our minds. Intercourse with a choice spirit is always uplifting; and it never fails to create within us an eager desire for more and more competency and fitness for this kind of intercourse. In no sort of fellowship of soul with soul is this so manifest as in fellowship with God. When we hear His voice; when we feel the warmth and cheer of His presence; when we experience the gladdening and exalting sensations of heart which come in answer to His inner whisperings, it never fails to kindle within us intense longings to be more like God, and more in sympathy with all His thoughts and plans. We know that the still small voice would be more audible to our ears, and that we should be better able to interpret the signs and tokens of God in and about us, and enriched vastly more by our conversation with Him, were we holy as He is holy. This is one of the distinct aspirations which talking with Him stirs in the soul—to be like God.

This is an outcome and blessed fruit of prayer in all its phases. It makes us feel the need of being better; and it creates in us a longing to be better. This is one of the incidental and, it may be, unconscious answers to prayer.

But we are to make this partakership in the

divine nature, or likeness to God, a distinct object of prayer. As we ask for the pardon of our transgressions, for light to guide, for strength to work, for patience in suffering, for a right understanding of our own wrong tendencies and infirmities, for skill to interpret the providences which have to do with our lives, and for grace and courage to do our duty—our whole duty—day by day, so are we to ask for the divine aid which will help us into an increasing likeness to Him who holds in Himself and illustrates all moral perfections. That is a great prayer with which Sir Philip Sidney closes one of his religious sonnets:

"Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me,"—

as it was a great aspiration which he cherished when he invoked his mind to "grow in that which never taketh rust." When we pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God we pray for all consummations in one; and when we pray for likeness to God we pray for the sum of all virtues.

In these suggestions it is implied, of course, that our prayers are to be sincere and earnest—wholehearted. Prayer is a mockery, or, if not a mockery, a bit of inanity, if all the honesty and energy of the soul are not put into it. Words, words, words, be they never so flowing and pretty, are but dry leaves which the autumn winds have snatched from the forests, if there be in them no hot blood of eager desire and determined purpose. Coleridge has said that "to pray with all your heart and strength, with the reason and the will, to believe vividly that God will listen to your voice

through Christ, and verily do the thing He pleaseth thereon—that is the last, the greatest achievement of the Christian warfare on earth."

Right here a wide field opens to us. For there is much which needs to be said on the subject of prayer, and of sincerity and earnestness in prayer, not only in its relations to growth in the qualities which will make us like God, but also in its general aspects. It will not do to say that prayer is a lost art; for it is not. But there can be no question that prayer is too much neglected It is crowded into a corner; and the ill effects of its disuse, or hurried use, are seen far and wide.

Why is it that this man has been standing still, if not actually going backward in his Christian life, through the last decade? Why is it that his knowledge of God has not become steadily richer and deeper during these years? Why is it that his character has not been gathering into itself the sensitive delicacy and refinement of a constantly increasing purity? Why is it that his love has not been growing in volume and force like a stream that starts in the mountains and flows on, fed all the way by tributaries, till it reaches the sea? Why is it that his righteousness has not warmed into a whiter heat against iniquity and a more glowing enthusiasm for every good cause? It is because the man has not been praying. He may have been saying his prayers all the while; but he has not been praying. There has been no praying in the sense in which the Master prayed when "cold mountains" echoed back his cry and the "midnight air" caught His petition and bore

it up into the ear of the Father. There has been no praying in the sense in which Paul prayed when he poured out his prostrate soul in a desire so intense that he would have been willing to be consumed in it for the salvation of his "kinsmen according to the flesh." There has been no praying in the sense of prayer which Coleridge had in mind when he spoke of it in the words just quoted, as the fusing of all the powers of the soul and concentrating them on the expression of the desire which is in the heart.

We suffer all along the line of our spiritual life because so little time is given to our closets. In the rush of incessant work, in the complete absorption in outward activities which so many experience, there is danger that the heart will not be sufficiently refreshed by waiting on the Lord, and that the inner life will not be replenished as it ought with heavenly manna. We shall not follow the Good Shepherd long unless we follow Him with fond regularity into the green pastures and beside the still waters. Some time within the course of each revolving sun we must sit down in quiet and let the Christ feed us with the loaves which His lips have blessed and His hands have multiplied. It is as a great preacher has said: "No life is complete which does not sometimes sit trustingly to be fed of God." The Son of God Himself had His hours of retreat when He felt that He must be alone with the Father and be nourished in His thought and purpose by fellowship with the Father. The Christian experience will be shallow, and the Christian zeal will be

short-lived which does not have daily vitalizing by the contact of the human heart with the divine heart. If one is to hear the still small voice he must now and then stop and listen.

Professor Phelps began one of his chapters on prayer by saying: "We are often in a *religious hurry* in our devotions. How much *time* do we spend in them daily? Can it not be easily reckoned in moments? Probably many of us would be discomposed by an arithmetical statement of our communion with God. It might reveal to us the secret of much of our apathy in prayer, because it might disclose how little we desire to be alone with God." In the same chapter he writes: "It has been said that no great work in literature or in science was ever wrought by a man who did not love solitude. We may lay it down as an elemental principle of religion, that no large growth in holiness was ever gained by one who did not *take* time to be often, and long, alone with God. This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. Not otherwise can the great central idea of God enter into a man's life, and dwell there supreme." We are not enough apart from men and alone with the Unseen and Eternal One. We are not familiar enough with the Scriptures which the Spirit can employ to drive in upon us a conviction of our failures and needs; and those other portions which He can employ to reveal to us the mind of the Master. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." If only the soul will consent to drop down at suitable times into the holy hush where the noise and clatter of the world

retreat from the ear, some of those deep things of God will be quite certain to be caught and borne away. What a difference that makes in the life, what a difference in the character, whether or not one has entered into the secret and has mastered some of the deep things of God!

But coming back from these general considerations which cover the whole prayer life, and include other subjects for which we should pray as well as this one for likeness to God, it is to be said once more, and said, if it may be, with an increased emphasis, that we are to make partakership in the divine nature a definite and constant subject of prayer. It is to be a theme of habitual meditation; a topic on which we are all the time seeking light; a prize for which we never cease nor slacken our own running; but above and beyond all this it is to be a burden of prayer. It is to be a perpetual yearning and an unfailing cry in our hearts and on our lips that, up to the full measure of our capacity, we may love as God loves, be pure as He is pure, helpful as He is helpful, righteous as He is righteous, tender and sweet and true, always giving out of our best, always fellowshiping with what is highest and worthiest, always trying to recall the wayward, to lift up the lowly, and sound notes of joy in sad hearts — all after the divine pattern.

Never shall we realize this mighty spiritual uplift and transformation without prayer and the assistance from on high which comes in answer to prayer. In seeking this likeness to God we must have as clear an idea of what we want as

Jacob had when he "was left alone" there at the ford of Jabbok, and along with this clear idea the unyielding persistency which enabled him to wrestle till the daybreak for the blessing he was determined to have. We need God's help, and we must have it, if we are to find our way into partakership in the divine nature. Well would it be for us could we enter into and abide in the mood in which Michael Angelo, a man of devoutness as well as of genius, was when he wrote the words:

"Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way
No man can find it; Father, Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread."

IV
READING

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness."

—*The Apostle Paul.*

"Thy word have I laid up in my heart,
That I might not sin against Thee."

—*The Psalmist.*

"Those first men knew Christ from living with Him, hearing what He said and seeing what He did. Part of it they wrote down—but just as their creed came out of their companionship, so their records grew out of their life with Jesus—that is why we can get back through the records concerning Jesus to a vital acquaintance with Jesus. The experience became a record. Thus does life always tend to become literature. Then through the record later generations get back into the life. Thus does holy literature render its true and noble service to life."

—*William Fraser McDowell.*

"The opinion of the Bible bred in me, not only by the teaching of my home when I was a boy, but also by every turn and experience of my life and every step of study, is that it is the one supreme source of revelation—the revelation of the meaning of life, the nature of God, and the spiritual nature and needs of men."

—*Woodrow Wilson.*

IV

READING

BACON'S statement that reading makes a full man is not likely ever to become antiquated. Men may be good men without being great readers. That everybody knows. There are wise men who are wise, not in virtue of the books they have mastered, but because they are capable of keen observation and rational reflection, and have a quick eye to see which is the better of the conclusions and courses that are open to them. But a man cannot be a full man in the sense of being well informed on subjects of interest and importance without days and nights given to the authors who are competent to instruct him.

The reading now in mind, however, is not reading in general; it is reading which has a special bearing on spiritual development. Scientific investigators, professional men, persons engaged in different lines of trade and industry, and specialists of all sorts, gather about them and diligently study the works of writers who treat the subjects with which they severally have to do. An up-to-date man in any department of life feels that he must know the literature pertaining to the business or calling in which he is occupied. He is on the watch for suggestions; and he seeks and welcomes light wherever he can find it.

Is not this the method which must be pursued by one who would grow in the graces of the Spirit, and steadily increase in likeness to Christ, and become more and more a child of the Father? If we fail to avail ourselves of the recorded experiences and mature wisdom of those who have walked the same road we are walking, who have met the same foes, inward and outward, which we have to encounter, and who have had to watch the same pitfalls and bear the same burdens and overcome the same discouragements as we have to do, and who yet reached the goal, and in instances not a few won resplendent victories, can we expect to make sure and steady headway in the cultivation of spiritual insight and the achievement of spiritual masteries?

But what shall we read? Life is too short and duties are too pressing to read more than the merest fraction of the literature which would be helpful to spiritual growth. Wise selection is of the utmost importance. The haphazard way will do little for us here. We may chance upon a good and inspiring volume now and then, but the best books for the end now in view will be reached only by our reaching for them.

It hardly needs to be said that for spiritual culture the book of books to be read is the Bible. No writings known to the world take one so into the heart of God as the Scriptures. No writings reveal to us so fully the weaknesses and needs, and at the same time make so evident the measureless possibilities which lie on the moral and spiritual side of our natures as the Scriptures. No other

writings help us so effectually. Nevertheless, it is much to be feared that so far as reading it for spiritual profit is concerned the Bible is a sadly neglected volume. As ministers, as theological instructors, as Sunday school teachers, and workers in other departments of Christian activity, we read it that we may understand it, or get aid in what we are doing; but how little we pore over it with the single aim of becoming better acquainted with God and purified and quickened in heart!

There are some commonplaces with regard to Bible reading which must be observed in order to secure the best results to our spirituality.

The Scriptures must be read with helps. An intelligent understanding, so far as this is possible, of the authorship of the various books and letters, of the times, places and circumstances in which each was produced, and each act recorded was performed, and each message was delivered, and of whatever else goes to the illumination of what has been written and put in our hands, is essential, if the reading is to be of highest profit. A warmly sympathetic reader might be instructed or thrilled or awed by passages taken at random from the speeches of Daniel Webster; but he would surely get more light and be more deeply stirred if he knew that the passages before him were taken from a speech made in court, or in the senate chamber, or at Plymouth Rock, or on Bunker Hill. With the many aids now prepared, we can follow Moses in his great leadership, and better understand both him and his message; can sit with David out under the stars, and walk with him

as he leads his flocks, and find new and deeper meaning in his figures of speech; can see the condition of the nation to which Isaiah addressed his message and Hosea and Micah spoke; can go with Paul from city to city on his great missionary tours; and above all journey with the Great Teacher and catch, as otherwise we might not be able to do, the significance and pertinency of what He said and what He did.

At the same time the helps, whatever they are and however useful, must not be permitted to usurp the place of what has been written by the pen of inspiration. It is in His light,—in His light within, and in His light as He flashes it in on the mind from the pages of the Book—that we see light. What the writers of introductions, and what the commentators and expositors may say, are only candles which throw their beams but a little way out into the darkness, while what God says to us through prophets and apostles, and especially through the recorded utterances of Him who spoke as never man spoke, is as the sun in the heavens. We are warmed, we are instructed, we are quickened and uplifted, we are taken forward into blessed spiritual fellowship, when we open our minds and hearts and let God speak to us through the illuminating pages of His word.

There is another suggestion of no little importance. If the Bible is to be read with a view to the highest spiritual improvement, it must be read systematically. Dr. Horton of London, in his Yale lectures, commends the plan of reading the Bible through by course each year. He thinks

that no one ought to be more than a twelvemonth away from any passage in the Scriptures. A habit of this kind, followed up and confirmed by a long experience, enables me to bear hearty testimony to the value of this method. Not that this is the only reading one shall give to the Book, but reading it in this way whatever other portions of Scriptures may be engaging attention will not fail to afford increasing delight and a growing sense of nearness to God.

Read after this systematic fashion through a long course of years, with pencil in hand, it is surprising how many passages will be found marked at the end of a decade even and how many suggestions bearing on one's own inner life will have leaped into mind and become fruitful. These marked passages are records of experience —stages in growth; and like signboards on country roads they help one to see in what direction he is traveling and what progress he is making. Ministers, if there are any such who find themselves at loss for passages on which to preach or for topics pertinent to the hour, by following this method of systematic course-reading of the Bible will soon have notebooks crowded with texts and themes.

Still the personal value of it all is the spiritual enrichment of the soul. A steady, persistent, orderly reading of the Scriptures leads one on into the secret of the Almighty, and a rewarding discovery of the hidings of His power and the riches of His grace. To read God's Word is to nourish the soul in godliness.

At Bambarnē, in one of the vexatious detentions to which he often had to submit, especially in the closing years of his life, Livingstone read the Bible through four times. It was the bread of life to his soul. It was a fountain of living waters. It brought him invisible companionship. Through the windows which it opened he saw God; and strength was put into his feeble knees and courage into his heavy heart. In its revelations and assurances he caught the accents of a father's voice.

But over and beyond all this, would it not be a marked advantage to us in our spiritual growth to read the Word of God carefully through—once at least—under guidance of the single thought of the immediate personal relation of each individual named to Him with whom we all have to do?

This is a quickening and richly rewarding thought to carry along with us in the attempt to master any worthy biography. We never get so deep into the story of any man's life as when the door of the soul is set ajar, and we look in and see how much and what kind of intimacy there is with God, and how far the soul is molded and directed by divine influence. To discover the way in which Wycliffe was inwardly prepared for his work; or in which the eyes of Martin Luther were opened by the healing touch of the Master, and he was led to apprehend his mission in the world; or the process by which John Wesley was fashioned into fitness for his great task, is the equivalent of a stirring course in divinity. I love to follow Chalmers and see him grow till he gets the clue to the message he is to deliver; and Robert-

son, Livingstone, Finney, Drummond, Shaftesbury, and others of the glorious fellowship of God's elect till each has come into terms of intimacy with the Lord, and is ready to be His voice to speak to the wayward, and His hand to help the overborne and prostrate.

But, keeping within the limits of the Scriptures, and following out this plan, our questions will be of two kinds:

For those who came into the life of loyalty to God, and were to any considerable degree happy, or successful, or serviceable in it, this is what we should wish to know: How was the way opened to them? What motives led them to the step? What demonstrations accompanied the choice they made? How were they encouraged, guided, disciplined, developed? How were their eyes opened and their vision broadened, and their interest kept alive in the things of the kingdom? How fitted in special instances for special service, or for grappling with formidable undertakings? How made brave, resolute, undaunted in the face of foes? How enabled to realize the moral stature—the power and dignity—which they attained? How rise into the sweet peace which many of them knew, and turn their vexations, pains and troubles into exultant songs? How made equal to the tremendous tasks which some of them had to perform, and to the bearing of the apparently crushing burdens which some of them had to carry? If they won against odds, and achieved astonishing victories, as some of them surely did, what was the secret of their winning?

For those who failed to respond to the appeals made to them to come under the power of an endless life, or who, having started in the better way, yielded to some easily besetting sin or subtle temptation, and were overcome of evil, our questions would be of the same probing sort, and we should ask: Why did they fail to hear and to heed and to grow? What beguiling sophistries confused their judgment, and what fatal compromises did they make with conscience? At what fork in the road did they part company with so much of truth as they knew, and register their first disobedience? How stifle the voice of duty in the soul and come short of the glory which is in waiting for all who love and follow the Lord?

Many of the leading characters in sacred history were called into the fellowship and service of God in impressive ways. There is nothing in our experience, it may be, to correspond to their startling entrance into the divine life. We had no challenge to lead a migratory movement into a distant land. We had no dream in which messages came to us from on high. We saw no bushes aflame with awe inspiring disclosures of the presence and will of Jehovah. We felt no shock of the temple and no touch of a live coal on our lips. We were not overpowered and smitten into blindness by a sudden excess of light. We grew into the life of faith in Christ in virtue of our early training, perchance, or after long and sober reflection; or we may have come to it through a clear and oppressive sense of need, or on the ground of privilege and duty.

But all this makes no practical difference. At bottom human nature is one. The men and women whose names are given in the sacred records were of passions kindred to our own. They were subject, as we are, to human limitations,—trials, besetments, vexations, and the opposition of many cunning and malignant foes. Few men of mark have ever walked from cradle to grave in unobstructed sunlight. Few men have escaped doubts, questions, trouble, sufferings. Whoever has been taught of God can teach us. Whoever has succeeded in the struggle for light and life,—in the struggle to resist temptations, overcome obstacles, and climb to lofty heights of spiritual apprehension and character, can help us in our struggles to make good the possibilities which are implied in our creation in the divine image. The lapses of good men are awful warnings to us all. It instructs, but it also startles us to read some things in the stories of Abraham, Saul and David. Men who have laid hold on the promises and done many mighty works or who have been on such terms of fellowship with the Lord that they have caught the secret of moral beauty and strength, are the men at whose feet it is always wise for us to sit.

In illustration of the pertinency and profit of this method of Bible reading recall two or three passages which have close connection with individual lives, and see how personal they may be made to ourselves, and how helpful.

"Enoch walked with God." What an achievement! Is there any other achievement like it; any other so satisfactory and complete? How

was it done? May I do it? Ought I to do it? Ought I at least to try to do it?

Ezekiel says that he "saw visions of God." It was an experience of the highest order. The impact of it on the mind of the prophet was so distinct, so deep and impressive, that the year in which it occurred, the month, the day, the place, the association, were all unforgetable. No wonder! For no search of the eye, no dream of the imagination, no outreach of thought, can stretch beyond a vision of God. What does it mean? Especially, what does it mean for me? We keep saying it over to ourselves: "A vision of God!" "A vision of God!" Did anybody else ever have a vision of God? Was that what Jacob had in his dream? Was that what Isaiah had in the temple? That is what he says: "I saw the Lord." At length and timidly we venture to ask: May we, too, have "visions of God"? May we, too, "see the Lord"? Can anything be more rewarding, more elevating, more inspiring in its influence on all our powers and faculties and aims than getting just that apprehension of God which we can picture to our minds under the figure of "seeing" Him?

Paul says: "For me to live is Christ." That is his rule; that is his program; that is his end in view; that is the secret of one of the most marvelous careers of which history gives us any account. It is just Christ. We read the statement over and over again,—that is if we are going through the Scriptures according to the scheme suggested,—"For me to live is Christ"—"For me to live is

Christ," and by and by the thought of our failure and why we fail in achieving Christ-likeness comes rushing in upon us, and we cry out afresh for the renewing of our life after the pattern set for us by the great apostle.

Jesus says: "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." That is the challenge of a divine example. If our standard is the Christ-life and our aim is Christ-likeness, will it not be of inexpressible value to us to stop right there and linger long over these words?

Here, then, is food for thought. Here, too, is an open door into the secret of growth in grace and in divine likeness. It is a marvelous Book—this old Bible. What a picture is that drawn by Burns in *The Cotter's Saturday Night:*

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And 'Let us worship God,' he says, with solemn air."

There is the reverent and dignified priesthood of the father. There the happy home circle. There the sweet and wholesome observance of family worship. There the orderly life of a hard-working, self-respecting and God-fearing Scotch household. But it all grows out of and centers around that "big ha' Bible." Save for that "big ha' Bible" there never would have been any such

scene in Scotland or elsewhere to be limned by painter or poet. Read it or study it by whatever method we may, however, the wonders and vitalities of this Book never cease to grow upon us.

Never shall I forget the note of triumphant gladness with which a dear old washerwoman—a mother in Israel if there ever was one—said to me one day as I was making a call upon her, and as she spoke pointed to a fresh volume of the Scriptures lying on the table: "My poor boy has begun to read the Book, and he is a new creature." He was a new creature because the Book led him to the One who cleanses from all sin and renews wasted lives. A lamp to many feet, a light to many paths, this old Book has been.

In a recent chapter out of his own experience in which he has told the world what the Bible means to him, Dr. Grenfell has said: "The Bible is no mere epistle or collection of epigrammatic truths, no mere book of irreproachable maxims and platitudes, no mythical chronicle of marvels that occurred in a musty past. It is a living, ever up to date guidebook, a storehouse of all necessary wisdom. Never book spake like this book." At the risk of unnecessary repetition, let it be said again, and still over and over if need be, that there is nothing written, and nothing likely to be written, that goes so straight into the inner chambers of our being, and brings everything to light, and at the same time puts within our reach the resources of infinite help which we have in God as the Holy Scriptures. "That is the book one always comes back to," said Henry Drummond, as

the end was drawing near, and he had asked to have the New Testament read to him.

It would be a decided gain to each of us were more of the precious and vitalizing passages of the Scriptures committed to memory, and so made available for us at all times. This is done to a gratifying extent in our Sunday schools and in some other circles. Still there are large possibilities here which are not utilized; and not to know by heart a considerable number of choice selections from the Book is a distinct loss to our spirituality. In times of sorrow, under the weight of our daily burdens, face to face with temptations, to recall some verse or paragraph warm with comfort, or some great and precious promise, or some sharp warning, is like a reënforcement from the skies. What wealth of meaning there is touching the way in which He had fortified his soul for coming conflicts in the "It is written," "It is written," "It is written," of our Lord.

Besides Bible words and sentences are seeds and they germinate; they have life in them, and they grow. Carried in the heart, cherished, brooded over, meditated upon, summoned often to the lips, they mean more to-day than they did yesterday, and they will keep meaning more and more as life goes on. As years lengthen and experiences multiply, who that loves the Lord and is seeking to do His will does not find an ever increasing significance in such phrases and expressions as "Our Father," "My Redeemer," "God so loved the world," "Christ the hope of glory," "A very

present help," "Let this mind be in you which was also in Him," "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," and "To them that love God, all things work together for good." Yes, the words of the Book are always increasing in attractiveness, richness and power.

It can hardly seem incongruous to associate with the reading of the Bible for spiritual ends the reading and memorizing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

The editor of the *British Weekly* has recently told us that Dr. Jowett includes in his vacation outfit not only a Bible, but a first-class hymn-book. He finds hymns both comforting and stimulating; and they aid greatly in keeping his mind and heart in right spiritual condition for his work. Genuine hymns are the deposits of religious experience. One hears in them the whisperings of the still, small Voice. They utter the deep longings of the soul, they reveal sharp inner wrestling, they echo the shouts of triumph, and they breathe into us the fine spirit of peace. They sweeten the soul. Some of them stir like a trumpet. Some of them soothe like a summer breeze. Some of them interpret truth and duty like an oracle of God through the mouths of the prophets. Some of them open vistas of glory into which we can look with enkindling rapture. But all of them alike and in their measure bring the divine near to the human and refresh and refine the soul.

Multitudes could testify that "O God, our help in ages past," "Nearer, my God, to Thee," "Rock of Ages," "Jesus, lover of my soul," "My faith

looks up to Thee," "All hail the power of Jesus' Name," and other sacred songs of similar import, have been wings on which they have mounted to new nearness to God, or calls to duty which have made them braver and stronger for the wrestle. It is well known that "A charge to keep I have" was a bugle blast in the ear of Frances Willard which helped to hold her in close alliance with God and true to the great cause to which she had dedicated her life. Hymns which express longings for comfort in times of distress and sorrow, or which ask for guidance in circumstances of perplexity, or which open the eyes to new achievements and blessings in the Lord, which may be ours if we will only secure fitness to receive them, make it easier to put off the old and put on the new, and to conform the life to the higher standards which are set up for us in the ideal of a higher spirituality.

As with choice passages of Scripture, so with choice hymns,—it is good to commit them to memory, and have them ready in mind when emergencies or moods make them pertinent and helpful

A cherished friend of mine, of much intelligence and piety, who stands now on the outer edge of an experience of many years in the world, recently said that he knows more than a hundred of the best hymns by heart. In lonely hours by day and in sleepless hours in the night, he repeats some of these choice productions to himself. He gets comfort out of them, of course; but he gets more than comfort—he gets inspira-

tion and strength; for they take him into a sweet fellowship with the Father. Many, many times, in the day and in the night, through a long course of years, and always with appreciable effect, have those wise words of supplication, penned by John Newton, been on my own lips:

> "Quiet, Lord, my froward heart,
> Make me teachable and mild,
> Upright, simple, free from art,
> Make me as a weaned child:
> From distrust and envy free,
> Pleased with all that pleases Thee."

The sense of burden-bearing; the fret and worry which are often associated with the day's round of duties; the impatience likely to rise at other people's shortcomings; the inward chafing at some unexpected hindrance of plan or purpose; and the fear that the Helper is far away and not near, often vanish at the repetition of those words like a fleck of cloud from the face of the sun. Along with this simple plea for a quiet mind and a teachable spirit, distrust goes and trust comes, and envy, like the guilty thing it is, slinks away. The soul rises into gladness in the Lord.

Though his poems do not easily lend themselves to the service of song in public worship, George Herbert's "Temple" is a book to be kept near at hand and clasped close to the heart. It is quaint in its forms of expression. Like Milton's work, it is often overloaded with learning; it is marred by half fantastic conceits; but it is inwrought with the soul of things religious. Its

tender awe of God; the warm and abiding love it reveals for the Son of God; its sure grasp on all the great and precious promises of the Word; its simple, unquestioning faith; its lofty flights of apprehension and experience moving along at even pace with homely and easily remembered phrasings of daily duty; and the deep yearning breathed all through it to be led into green pastures and beside still waters, make the volume an invaluable aid to spiritual attainment and right living. It is to Herbert that we owe gratitude for the couplet:

> "Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright;
> The bridal of the earth and sky."

It is to Herbert, too, that the world is indebted for the setting of an immortal truth in words that are not likely to perish:

> "Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
> Makes that and th' action fine."

It is impossible not to think of our own dear Whittier in this connection. His words are often like a breath out of the heavens. He is not indifferent to moral distinctions. He makes bad things bad, and good things good; but he does not confuse them. Nor does he shut his eyes to the benumbing and enslaving power of conscious wrongdoing. His trust in the willingness of God in Christ to save unto the uttermost knows no bounds; but these are his own words:

"No word of doom may shut thee out,

. . . . . .

Forever round the Mercy-seat,
The guiding lights of love shall burn;
But what if, habit-bound, thy feet
Shall lack the will to turn?
What if thine eye refuse to see,
Thine ear of heaven's free welcome fail,
And thou a willing captive lie
Thyself thy own dark jail?

But he keeps God ever in mind, and the soul of man ever in mind. One who responds to his spirit will be sure to cherish high ideals and to feel an increasing eagerness to become more and more like the Son of God. Few writers make meanness seem so unutterably mean, and hate so hateful, and selfishness so repugnant to fine instincts and so hurtful to all that is best in the soul. One does not quite know how he does it; but one rises from a half hour's intimacy with the self revealings of this seer no longer debating the question of immortality, but somehow assured of the life everlasting. He sets in motion fresh currents of desire to do the will of God. His words nourish like manna in the wilderness. They refresh like water from the smitten rock. It is not his just simply to quiet the troubled spirit, to comfort distressed hearts, and to transform questionings into faith; but he stirs the blood to action; he fills one with resolute purpose to resist evil at all hazards, and to stand for the right on fields of conflict. The godliness which he inspires and to which he leads is real God-like-ness; and it means so much moral force, alive and at work in the ranks of humanity.

Whose heart is not softened; whose faith is not quickened; whose hope is not rekindled; who does not long to have a closer fellowship with the Master, as he rises and joins in singing:

"But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.
The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press
And we are whole again."

But here at the end, as at the beginning, we come back from all other literatures and stand face to face with the old Book. For the ends of spiritual culture the Bible has no successful rival. There is no book which penetrates so deeply into the thought and heart of God,—no book which lays bare so many of the mysteries and perils of human life,—no book which so exalts the powers and possibilities of the soul. As no other, this Book reveals our weaknesses and needs, brings us with honest confessions on our lips to the feet of Christ, and sends us back from our visits to Him with minds illuminated, spirits cheered, and in possession of a hope which takes hold on things unseen and undying. As no other, it challenges the intellect, for it utters the great word—God; it touches the conscience, for it reveals an accountability on our part for every word, deed and thought, and every opportunity for service which is opened to us; it comforts us, for it gives assurance that even the most prodigal of prodigals may

return to the Father's house if he will. This is what Joseph Parker in his "None Like It" has told us this marvelous Book was to him: "The Bible is to me the contemporary of all ages, a revelation at once ancient and modern, the living Word which abideth forever."

If we are to walk in such intimate fellowship with God, and grow into such likeness to Him, as to justify in any remotest degree the ascription to us of partakership in the divine nature, we must cultivate an open Bible, and be diligent students of what the pen of inspiration has written for our instruction in the things of the Eternal Life.

V

READING—*CONTINUED*

"The firmament showeth His handiwork."

—*The Psalmist.*

"Reading is . . . an employment which may leave behind it the most powerful impress for good, or which may reduce the soul to utter barrenness and waste."

—*Noah Porter.*

"The book had in a high degree excited us to self-activity, which is the best effect of any book."

—*Thomas Carlyle.*

"Observe God in His works.—Each tree, herb, flower,
Are shadows of His wisdom, and His power,—
Each bush and oak doth know—I Am."

—*Henry Vaughan.*

"The works of God are all expressions of His attributes and thoughts and feelings. Through them we may commune with Him.—And as we begin to feel and trace those lines of relation that bind all things into one system, the touch of any one of which may vibrate to the fixed stars, this communion becomes high and thrilling. Science is no longer cold. It lives and breathes and glows, and in the ear of love its voice is always a hymn to the Creator."

—*Mark Hopkins.*

"No living generation can outweigh all the past. If books without experience in real life cannot develop a man all around, neither can life without books do it. There is a certain dignity of culture which lives only in the atmosphere of libraries. There is a breadth and genuineness of self knowledge which one gets from the silent friendship of great authors."

—*Austin Phelps.*

V

READING—*Continued*

BROADENING out the view, it may be said with confidence that all really great books —all books which instruct and inspire, which purify sentiments and elevate ideals, and give one an intelligent apprehension of the things best worth knowing in the world and in life—may be read with profit by one who wishes to make progress in spirituality.

Not that any less emphasis is to be placed on the suggestions already made as to the reading of literature which is distinctly spiritual in its character and aims; but books not bearing this definite label may yet subserve the high purpose of helping one into the divine likeness. Bees have their pet flowers, and from these they harvest the larger share of their stored-up wealth; but there are few blossoms from which they cannot suck honey.

The Christian man who would keep in step with God must have an eye to see, an ear to hear, and an open mind. God moves in a wide circuit. He is in things large and small, in things afar and near, in things material and in things spiritual. Any author who can give us accurate information about a star, a rose, the wing of a bird or the fin of a fish; about an acorn, a crystal, chemical affinities, or the convolutions and activities of a human

brain; about life in any of the old buried cities of the orient or life in the latest settlement of the west; about the emergence of races, the growth of nations, and the progress of civilization from the dawn of history to the present hour, is sure to uncover some trace and make some impressive disclosure of Him who is behind all the vitalities and movements of the universe.

The trouble with most of us is that we are too circumscribed in our interests and habits of noting facts. We do not carry and cultivate an open eye; do not hark back; do not catch the significance of things about us; do not feel after God and listen eagerly for the sound of His voice. We may be sure, however, that He is near at hand; and through many channels and in many forms is disclosing His presence and unfolding His divine purposes. He has many agents who are busy in carrying out His plans. Some of these agents are strangely disguised, and further His purposes only as their wrath is turned to praise. But He is abroad, living, active, and somehow present in all movements and behind all events, all discoveries, all explorations, inventions, reforms in laws and customs, revolutions in states and empires, and in whatever has to do with the welfare of mankind.

All this means wide and diligent reading. Not otherwise can we keep in line with God as He moves out into self disclosure through His works and providences. This again means the careful selection of our books, and a definite aim kept constantly in view. We are not to read every-

thing that falls in our way. It is a lasting injury to read what will mislead and confuse the moral judgment and expose the passions to the risk of being set aflame with consuming fires. We want no fellowship with authors who, in the language of President Porter, threaten to turn our souls into "utter barrenness and waste." We are to put brain into our schemes of reading, as well as the results of our reading into the brain.

One cannot appraise and classify books for all types of mind, nor for the same mind in all stages of development; but there can be no risk in saying that among the literary productions which may be expected to help us, not only on the intellectual, but on the moral and spiritual side, the great biographies are entitled to a leading place.

Phillips Brooks has said: "Since the individual human life must always have a distinctness and interest which cannot belong to any of the groups of human lives, biography must always have a charm which no other kind of history can rival." This is evident on the face of it. Every great man is a fresh revelation of some sort of capacity and worth. The movements of society turn largely on marked personalities. It is not an accident that the Bible gives so much of its space to individuals. Great lives are the keys to history—the hinges on which history turns. The lives of men who have played a worthy part in the world, whether in one sphere or another, never fail to quicken and broaden aspiring souls. They often humiliate the reader, but they have a tonic value.

The man of wide renown just quoted names

Boswell's "Life of Johnson" and Lockhart's "Life of Scott" as in general estimation the two best biographies in the English language. To these may be fitly added the "Life of Brooks" himself by Allen, and Morley's superb portrayal of the career and character of Mr. Gladstone. These are all great books, and they set forth in great fashion what the men whose lives are rehearsed in them said and did and were. No thoughtful reader, no reader intent on his own growth in all the qualities essential to a well-rounded and vigorous personality, can master these pages without experiencing an elevation of his ideals and a decided quickening of his purpose to rise to new levels of moral and spiritual as well as mental attainments. An able professor, who then occupied a chair in one of our important institutions of learning, once told me that he had a habit of reading "Johnson's Life" through as often as once a year.

It is not Johnson alone, nor Scott nor Brooks nor Gladstone alone, that one touches in reading these books, but whole realms of literature and art and wise statesmanship and illuminating history are uncovered in the process. "In books," so Carlyle writes, "lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time." It is "not in her fleets and armies, her arsenals and cities" that Greece lives, but "in her books." With what jubilancy he exclaims: "The Books of Greece!"

The fact here emphasized, however, is not that the biographies just named are fitted to increase our knowledge, both of the men themselves and

of the age and many of the events of the age to which they belonged, but that they help us on the moral and spiritual side. God's breath is in them, and they make us conscious of His presence. The value to us of the Bible, the guidance and strength found in prayer, high aims, integrity, fidelity to trusts, the cultivation of the decencies and amenities of life, both directly and by implication, are all magnified in the detailed accounts of this group of illustrious men.

There is another line of biographies which ought to come close home to us, and be of marked service in stimulating our aspirations for fellowship with God and guiding us into courses of action that will make us more and more like Him. It is the biographies of men and women who have been eminently useful in their day, and in one way and another have set the world forward. There are not a few of these,—the men and women who have lived consecrated and altruistic lives and endeared themselves to mankind both by their examples and the contributions of various qualities and degrees which they made to human welfare.

As types of this class the biographies of Shaftesbury, Arnold of Rugby, Livingstone, and Mary Lyon may be cited. Of course, the life-stories of the great reformers, the pioneers and leading workers for the betterment of conditions and relations in society, the scientists and inventors who have laid bare so many of the laws and methods and mysteries of nature and turned them to the uses of man, might fitly have a place here. But

the names mentioned and the spheres covered by these names are enough for present purposes.

In all biographies to which one can afford to give much time there are two distinct values. They challenge us to sharp inward searchings, and they incite us to higher measures of sacrifice and service.

It is impossible to contemplate a soul deeply in earnest, turning aside from selfish pursuits and ambitions, and devoting all its resources of time, energy, influence, culture and wealth to making some one life, some one class in society, some one community, or some one race better than it otherwise would have been, without feeling impelled to subject one's own motives and aims in life to a severe cross-questioning.

Then such biographies as these constrain to practical sympathy with men in their needs and wild wanderings, and to such lines of effort as will aid good undertakings and put heart and hope into a few at least of those who are overburdened and bitterly sad, or who are morally low down and far away from their own better selves, and from Him in whom is light and life. It is not easy to rise from an hour's intimate fellowship with one of these elect souls and go right on in our old selfish ways. If we have any capacity for bringing ends to pass, or have wealth, standing, education, it seems at once as if we ought to be up and doing the things which will let in a little light on the dark places of the earth.

A moment's reflection will make all this clear. Next to coming under the influence of God in

Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, nothing aids us so much in struggles to put off the old and put on the new as getting into the intimacy of great, clean, earnest personalities. Indeed it is through close association with this type of individuals, whether in person or through books, that longings, deep and intense, are awakened within us for a better knowledge of God and a closer walk with Him.

Here again is shown the power and pertinency of the personal element in the Scriptures "I go a-fishing.—We also go with thee." We fall in and move on with purposeful souls. We warm our hands at the fires which other hands have kindled. High enthusiasm is contagious. Years ago in crossing the ocean the "Life of Madame Guyon," by Upham, fell into my hands, and I read it carefully through. Since then it has been no wonder to me that Horace Bushnell, one of whose great texts has just been quoted, was profoundly moved by some features of the experience brought out in that book. A strong belief by anybody in a great God, and in the great things He is willing to do for us, always stirs us. The quickening energy that is lodged in the life story of a sincere and resolute soul is simply limitless. It is akin to the bracing touch of the divine hand. It always lifts and strengthens.

Only a short time before his death the late Dr. Little, of Garrett Biblical Institute, said to me: "When I find the fires of enthusiasm and devotion burning low in my heart I take down the 'Life of Livingstone' and begin to read it; but I

have not turned many pages before the embers are aglow, the flames have started up, the old fervor is revived, and I want to get back to my tasks and do something worth while." So it is almost invariably. Contact with an earnest, consecrated life, in whatever way, tends to awaken us to our best. For fifty years the story of Arnold of Rugby has been an unfailing source of inspiration to me. A chapter of Drummond stirs my blood like the blast of a trumpet. The old thrill felt in listening to them comes back when I read a sermon by Beecher or Park or Brooks. Who can go with Martyn to India or stand by him when in his last struggles, without reënforcement of moral purpose and spiritual aspiration! Such divinely anointed souls make us eager to be set apart with the same holy oil. As we are now we are conscious that their garments would not fit us; but as we come near to them in the confessions which they have witnessed we have at least fleeting moods in which we would like mantles woven in the same loom in which those worn by the Eliots, the Martyns, the Judsons, and the Livingstones were woven. Think what it would mean to them in self-respect, culture, dignity, and usefulness were every girl in the land to read with care and thoughtfully ponder the life stories of Elizabeth Fry, Zilpah Grant, Alice Freeman, Florence Nightingale, Frances Willard, and a long list of others of kindred spirit and aims! God comes very near to us in the disclosures of sweet and consecrated lives.

Biography is the halfway house to History.

This, naturally, would be the place at which to say something of the value to us of wide acquaintance with the past. Nothing is clearer to me, nothing is more impressive, than the fact of a divine purpose running through the ages. In the long run the centuries spell out God. Some historians try to keep Him out of their pages. They fail. He is there. It is a great thing to see Him and feel Him in the on-march of events. Just so much, however, is all that can be said on the subject here and now.

But there are books not distinctively religious which have yet proved to have a religious value. There is a striking testimony to this effect in the "Confessions" of the Bishop of Hippo. Augustine says: "In the ordinary course of study, I fell upon a certain book of Cicero, whose speech almost all admire; not so his heart. This book of his contains an exhortation to philosophy, and is called 'Hortensius.' But this book altered my feelings, and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord; and made me have other purposes and desires. Every vain hope at once became worthless to me, and I longed with an incredible burning desire for an immortality of wisdom, and began now to arise, that I might return to Thee." We should hardly venture to use a treatise by the distinguished Roman orator on philosophy as a revival tract; but here was a man turned from bad to good, from moral death to moral life, by a book of this sort.

As there are secular books, or books not distinctly religious, which are yet helpful to right

views and conduct, so there are religious books which must be read with caution. There are men whose business it is to know all about the old cults and the new fads, just as there are men whom duty calls into districts infested by contagious diseases; but it is not wholesome, no matter how much our curiosity or our courage may be challenged to the venture, to spend much time over books which have nothing to commend them but their overemphasis on minor points, or the ignorance or the conceit or the assumption of their authors. Human credulity is not an ancient and outworn infirmity; and unblushing claims and high-sounding plausibilities are not likely to be wanting in deluded victims. But what we are after is a well balanced and robust spirituality,—a spirituality that can stand strains, bear burdens, and do valiantly for the kingdom. This kind of life in God and for God will come only when fed with a moral nerve-strengthening and a moral muscle-building diet. Whatever book justifies itself to our experience by making us more like the Master in thought and word and life, and more eager to win the world to righteousness, is a good book for us to read.

From these books whose thoughts have been traced and whose forms have been given to them by the hand of man, we turn to another book which is the direct outcome of the divine mind—the Book of Nature. In the great outer world there are lessons for us which, in the interest of an intelligent apprehension of God and of our own closest walking with Him, we cannot afford to

miss. The Psalmist affirms that "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." Lowell sings with what we must think fidelity to fact:

> "To win the secret of a weed's plain heart
> Reveals some clue to spiritual things."

There are two or three warnings which are likely to fall on our ears at this suggestion.

Many sincere and earnest Christians have been led to look with suspicion upon the influences which reach us through forms of natural beauty and grandeur for the reason that so many who have been rapt admirers of the wonderful works of creation have had neither eye nor ear for Him who is behind all these wonderful works. They look with awe upon stars and mountains and seas in wild commotion, and go into ecstasies over the glow of a sunset, or the fashion and fragrance of a rose, or the skill displayed in a butterfly's wing; but they never look over the rim of things to see God. This is a valid reason for caution, but not for shutting our eyes to the presence of Him who expresses Himself in every act and article of His wide creation.

There are also sincere and earnest believers who are apprehensive lest attempts to get near to God through the outer world may lead, not to closer intimacy with Him, but to distrust and uncertainty and the devitalizing of our faith in the personality of the Supreme Energy—the Energy which we love to think of, not as a mere blind Force, but as the Creator of the ends of the earth

and—our Father. This would be to rob the universe of anything like an ethical purpose running through it, to take the divine hand out of providence, to leave us with no present help in time of trouble, and to deprive the human race of the measureless strength and comfort found in the conviction of One in us and over us in whom we live, and who has endowed us with an immortality which He seeks to make an endless blessing to us through the gift of His Son. This is a serious matter and calls for a serious word.

It may be said once more, as it has been said so often, that it is a misfortune to be deeply regretted that there ever has been any controversy between religion and science. Science in itself is not atheistic—it cannot be. Facts in the world and in the universe may be out of accord with what men think and say about them; they cannot be out of accord with God. This, of course, is on the assumption that there is a personal God,—the precise question in debate between theistic and atheistic science. Of this, however, more in a moment. So still assuming that there is a personal God, it is to be said that facts are the forms of speech through which, in so far as he He does it in the outer world, God expresses His creative thought and makes known His intents and aims to His rational creatures. Science as well as religion has its own rights. It has also indisputable rights under the shelter of revelation. The first chapter of Genesis is one of the sublimest challenges to thought and investigation which was ever uttered. Both the elements and the war-

rants for science are there. It was just as inevitable and just as proper that there should be a science of the things which He had made as that there should be a science of the Maker. Neither can be debarred from the hospitality of the human mind. Neither can be excluded from the severest scrutiny of which the human mind is capable. Endowed with mental faculties as we are, we must think both about God and about His works. There may be false conceptions of God—narrow and misleading interpretations of Scripture. So also there may be crudeness, bitterness, and a belligerent temper displayed in the sphere of science. Nobody disputes either of these statements. But for all that God abides, the Scriptures remain, and science cannot be expelled from its place as an enlightening and broadening factor in human progress.

As to evolution, it has come to stay. Not evolution in its original conception, but evolution as it has been modified by further study and thought. In its first announcement facts were left out which it was necessary to include and adjust if the theory was to have universal application and command general assent. The phrases "Natural Selection" and "Survival of the Fittest" were not elastic enough to meet all the requirements of the situation. Moral ends must have shelter under the doctrine; and altruism a place; and sharp breaks in the continuity and uniformity of the process of development, such as the presence and work of Christ in the ranks of humanity, needed to be explained and reconciled, if the theory was

to meet with general acceptance by instructed minds. Some of these facts have secured recognition and a lodgment in the scheme of evolution. Ethical aims, instead of being ruled out of the world-building process and the unfolding of civilization, have been admitted into the plan of evolution. God is no longer an impersonal and blind force in creation, but—God.

John Fiske, one of the ablest and most thoroughgoing evolutionists which we have had on this side of the water, says that "it is no empty formula or metaphysical abstraction which we would seek to substitute for the living God. The infinite and eternal Power that is manifest in every pulsation of the universe is none other than the living God.—The everlasting source of phenomena is none other than the infinite Power that makes for righteousness. Thou canst not by searching find Him out; yet put thy trust in Him, and against thee the gates of hell shall not prevail, for there is neither wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Eternal." In another connection this same author goes on record to this effect: "I think it can be shown that the principles of morality have their roots in the deepest foundations of the universe, that the cosmic process is ethical in the profoundest sense, that in that far-off morning of the world, when the stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy, the beauty of self sacrifice and disinterested love formed the chief burden of the mighty theme."

Neither science, nor philosophy, nor revelation

will ever answer all our questions—at least while we are still in the body. No school of instruction here on earth can advance us into such universality of attainment that there will be no more mysteries to confront us. But many things, otherwise unaccountable, become intelligible, credible, and illuminating when competent investigators tell us how they have come to be. The nearer we get to the facts anywhere, the closer will be our grip on truth, or rather, the closer will be the grip of truth on us.

Here and now, however, it is enough to say that the man who deliberately shuts his eyes to the facts of nature, and refuses to see God in the revelations which He has made of Himself, and is evermore making, in the outer world, fails to use, at his own great cost an open and attractive avenue to the apprehension and enjoyment of God. Chaucer has said,—and the saying is more comprehensive than it appears to be at first flush,—that "Nature" is "the vicar of the Lord." Nature expresses the Lord. Nature is the servant of the Lord. It is not wise but foolish to close the inlets of the mind to the revelations of God which may come to one from the careful observation and study of the handiwork of God. The stars are books in which divine thoughts are written. Lilies of the valley and roses of Sharon are poems inspired by the breath of the Author of all things.

It is true that there have been men who were eminent for their Christian culture, but who were yet indifferent to the fine and glorious creations

of God in spheres material. They got on in their spiritual life without paying much attention to their earthly environment; hence all such influences are set aside by them as of little value.

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, so his biographer tells us, "displayed a keen susceptibility to the beauties of nature" when a mere lad of twelve. His rambles in the Pyrenees, while still of that age, filled his soul with an exquisite delight. In later years all this was changed. It required the association of some historic event, or literary name, or great personality, to invest any locality or scene with special attraction for him. The Alps of Switzerland came in his estimation to be only "unmeaning masses." Dr. Schaff used to express his surprise that Calvin in his writings exhibited so little, if any, appreciation of the surpassing beauty and grandeur of the scenery in the midst of which he acted his great part in life. Some people, it may be, would think it no marvel that this trait was wanting in the author of the Institutes; but how about the Dean of Westminster?

The reverse of what is here stated is often true. Instead of being led into faith in God and a deepened religious experience by the wonderful exhibitions of skill and beauty and goodness which are seen in the physical universe, it now and then happens that it is only after one has come under the illuminating influence of divine grace that there is any suitable sense of the vast assemblage of objects of attraction and loveliness and high instruction with which earth and sky challenge

our attention. Henry Martyn wrote in his journal: "Since I have known God in a loving manner, painting, poetry and music have had charms unknown to me before. I have received what I suppose is a taste for them; for religion has refined my mind and made it susceptible of impressions from the sublime and beautiful." He was approaching what Millet had in mind when he said: "I wish I could make infinity perceptible."

But whatever our fears from the examples of others, or our natural inclinations and tastes, or the need there may be for the divine anointing of our spiritual eyes before we can make the best use of the eyes of the body, it is still true that God has messages for us in all the forms in which He works, and in all the facts to which He has set the seal of His energy, skill and love. No man can afford to be blind, if by any effort or possibility he can rise to an intelligent apprehension of it, to any manifestation of Himself which God makes at any time or in any sphere of His activity.

What a varied and commanding sense of the immanence of God in all the phases and operations of nature the psalmists and prophets of the Old Testament always felt! Fire and flood, earthquake and tempest, the lightning's flash and the thunder's roll, always gave them an overmastering conception of His nearness and power. Running brooks, green pastures, vines laden with rich clusters of purple grapes, ripening harvests, gentle dews and falling rains, filled their minds with thoughts of the divine goodness and fatherly

care. God in their apprehension was always associated with His works, and His works always suggested God.

It was not otherwise with our Lord. There was never any hint or flavor of sentimentalism in His references to birds and flowers and other objects of admiration in earth and sky; but it was always easy for Him to make connection between what He saw before Him and around Him and the great designer and upholder of all. Forms of beauty and utility were mirrors in which He saw the divine presence reflected. These forms were a language to Him, and He could turn them into terms in which He was able to bring home to men sweet and uplifting thoughts of the divine love and care. "Behold the fowls of the air," "Consider the lilies of the field."

Dr. Jowett has a fine passage in which he covers this same ground. "Why did our Lord go 'every night' into the mountain? And why was it His custom to walk so frequently in the garden? It was because He felt the boon companionship of Nature, the friendly helpfulness of the vast and the beautiful. Mountain and garden were allies of the spirit, silent Great Hearts who ministered to Him in the pilgrim way. He sought the mountain when He was pondering over great decisions; He was found in a garden 'in the night on which He was betrayed.' He heard wondrous messages in her voices; in her silences, too, He listened to mysterious speech. He read the evangel of the lilies. He understood the language of the birds. He read the face of the sky. He shared the secrets

of the soil and the seed. He walked through the cornfields on the Sabbath, and the ears of corn ministered to a richer Sabbatic peace. He stooped to hold intercourse with the grass of the field. The wind brought Him tidings of other worlds. The vineyards gave Him more than grapes and wine, they refreshed and strengthened His soul. Everywhere and always our Saviour was in communion with His willing and immediate friends in the natural world. Nature was to Jesus a blessed colleague in the soul's commerce and fellowship with the Highest."

It cannot be amiss to recall some passages in a letter written by Bernard of Clairvaux to a friend who afterward became the Archbishop of York. These passages are quoted by Dr. Storrs. "Trust one who has learned by experience. Thou wilt find something larger in the woods than in books. The trees and rocks shall teach thee what thou never canst learn from human masters. Dost thou think it not possible to suck honey from stones and oil from flinty rocks? Do not the mountains drop sweetness, and the hills flow with milk and honey, and the valleys stand thick with corn?" "His supreme lessons," so Dr. Storrs adds, "were always from the Scriptures, but—he found great lessons and inspiring suggestions in the lovely and lofty works of God, and kept for these an open sense."

So ought it to be with us all. God comes nearer to us in Christ, and through the ministries of the Spirit, and by way of the experiences of prophets and apostles, and simple trusting souls as well,

than through song of birds or grace of lilies or entrancing sweep of landscape, or any of the subtle or the awful forces of nature. Still day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; and stars and flowers have messages in them, which, if caught and heeded, never fail to increase our confidence and joy in the Lord. This is God's world, and God is in it. We need to be more open-eyed to His presence. The tiniest blossom at our feet is a thought of God. The mightiest orb in the heavens is an utterance of God.

It is the renewed soul, as in the instance of Henry Martyn, that Edwards had in mind when he wrote: "God's excellency, His wisdom, His purity and love, seem to appear in everything; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees, in the water and in all nature." These possibilities are all there, latent in nature, and waiting to make their impression on the soul when the soul is in mood to receive it. It has been said of Carlyle that he looked upon the universe as "the star-domed city of God." Well he might. Crooker affirms that a proper apprehension of our system of worlds "brings inexhaustible materials to the altar fires of piety." Not alone along purely spiritual lines, but along the outer highways of revolving constellations and planetary systems, majestic mountains and heaving oceans, flashing beams of light and crystal formations, radiant hues and bending blades of grass, and all graceful forms and sweet

sounds, God draws near and speaks to us out of the fullness of His divine love and knowledge.

We do not always face nature in a recipient mood any more than we are always in a state of mind to profit most in listening to a sermon, or reading the Scriptures, or opening the heart in prayer, or rendering some kindly service. Nature with her unvarying laws, her steady onsweep, her deafness to our appeals, often seems hard and relentless, and without any tenderness of compassion with which to greet and warm our hearts. But our predominant moods, if we are eager to be in line with God, and to learn all He has to teach us in all His ways of giving instruction and influencing character, are higher, better, saner; and in these moods the heavens are aflame with the bright shining of the face of our Father. One who wishes to learn of God cannot afford to be indifferent to nature and to the prophets and interpreters of nature, be they scientists or poets or what they may. A large, intelligent and absorbing fellowship with nature refines and elevates the soul, and brings us nearer to the Author of our being.

Wordsworth, in a memorable paragraph in the First Book of the Excursion, was doubtless reproducing a chapter out of his own experience when, discussing the emotions of the growing Youth in his contemplation of nature, he wrote:

"What soul was his, when, from the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beheld the Sun
Rise up, and bathe the world with light! He looked—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay

In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched
And in their silent faces did he read
Unutterable joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle; sensation, soul and form
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being . . . . . .
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God.
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
. . . . . .
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love."

This was the influence of God on a sensitive and appreciative soul through the medium of nature. Nature was the organ; God touched the keys, and the soul knew the master-hand that was playing on them and responded to the music. Who is there who has not had experiences in which the soft airs of summer caressing the cheeks seemed the breath of the near but unseen One; and the smile of the skies the smile of Him who rides in the chariots of the clouds; and all glories of day and night types and prefigurements of the glory in which the Eternal Father dwells forevermore?

Indeed what an inspiration it is to associate the facts and the outgoings of nature with the workings of the divine mind. It is one thing to look on revolving planets and opening flowers and mighty rivers and oceans and towering mountains and outreaching landscapes and birds and brooks and tiny pebbles at our feet, in a blind, dumb way, and quite another to behold all these wonders of creation as the expression of a divine thought and the setting forth of something which God wished

to utter. There is an attractiveness in all movements in the heavens and in the earth, a beauty and majesty in the working of all natural laws, which are never otherwise in evidence, the moment we discover in them the skill and the tender forethoughtfulness of the all-wise and all-loving Heavenly Father.

A little nature-study book, attractively written, about trees and the way they grow, fell one vacation day into my hands. It was a simple and rudimentary bit of work; but its pages glowed with the light of careful observation and the fine touch of genius. Reading it was a fascination. It seemed to put me on familiar speaking terms with every sturdy oak in the woods of Maine, with every dainty, glistening birch, every clump of somber spruces and hemlocks, every blade of grass waving in the fields or shooting up by the edge of the forest, every sprig of fern nestled under the shelter of the cool roots and rocks, every lily resting in serene unconsciousness and beauty on the waters, every fire-weed that flamed out along the old ricks, the wealth of golden-rod by the wayside, and every form of vegetable life about me. It was a nature symphony. It was beneficent Wisdom speaking to her children once more through waving branch and leaf and smiling flower. How different they all seem—the sun, the moon, the constellations, the whole vast universe of shining orbs—so soon as one begins to know something of astronomy. With what a fresh interest is every rock invested and every dip in stratification to one who knows geology. His

works do praise Him; and through them we become glad in the Lord.

It remains to add that it is books which challenge thought, which broaden intelligence, which awaken moral enthusiasm and elevate ideals, what ever department they may cover, philosophy, science, poetry, history, art, that are best worth our attention, and are most likely to lead on to visions of the burning bush. It takes longer and it is harder work to read books of this sort than those of a thinner fiber. Besides there are times when one is too tired to bend down to a thought-taxing work. But if one is intent on strengthening the mind, on laying in stores of helpful knowledge or educating the faculties for service, and on getting near to God in spirit and aim, it will be better to stick close to the writers who have won a high place in the universal regard. Whatever we may read, however, old books or new, books renowned or books not widely known, there is need of keeping steadily in mind the words of the collect: "Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest." If this is done, and the selections we make are wise, books will be found to be among the most direct and efficient aids in the development of the type of spirituality which makes one a partaker of the divine nature.

VI
MEDITATION

"Our times want the brooding spirit.—It is all come-and-go, and no stay. The dischargers of power are multiplied out of all proportion to the generators of power.—To overcome the world it is indispensable first to overlook the world from some private vantage ground quietly aloof. Solitude is the foster-mother of sublime resolves."

—*William R. Alger.*

"Union with God is brought to pass in three ways; to wit, by pureness and singleness of heart, by love, and by the contemplation of God."

—*Theologia Germanica.*

"There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their hearts
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

—*John Keble.*

"The more earnestly you are at work for Jesus, the more you need times when what you are doing for Him passes totally out of your mind, and the only thing worth thinking of seems to be what He is doing for you."

—*Phillips Brooks.*

VI

MEDITATION

BACK in my college days at Yale, President Woolsey preached a sermon, though not in the form in which it has since been published, on the topic which stands at the head of this chapter. Like others of his discourses, this one made a deep impression on my mind, and the thought of it has remained with me—a helpful influence—ever since. His main contention was that in the fever heats and mad rushings of what was regarded as the high-keyed period in which he and the rest of us were then living, there was special need, if we would hold our own against the world and make gains in Christ-like qualities, of coming to a stop now and then, and in the hush of the soul and the unobstructed presence of God talking things over with ourselves.

If there was occasion for this warning and timeliness in this counsel fifty years ago and more, with what added emphasis may both the warning and the counsel have utterance now. When was life on its this-world side ever so intense as it is to-day? When were nerves ever so strained and overstrained? When were demands on strength and time, on forecast and patience, ever so multiplied and insistent?

As a matter of course in dealing with the sub-

ject of spirituality and the successful development of it into a high and fine type, there has been frequent necessity for reference to the secular trend and atmosphere of the present age; for in this trend and atmosphere lies a distinct peril to spiritual growth, and one of the most urgent reasons for special care in the cultivation of the spiritual life. The facts in proof and illustration of this temper of the times, having, many of them, been cited in other connections, do not need here and now to be recalled. But they do need to be kept in mind, and very clearly and sharply in mind, if we would feel the full force of the plea for hours to be given to quiet, deeply in earnest, and richly rewarding thoughtfulness. The world will not help us into searching self-examination and high moods of joy in the Lord. It will not brood over us with the heavenly warmth which engenders life. If we get on, we shall have to resist counter drifts, to breast opposing waves, and to overcome innumerable hindrances, both mighty and subtle. We shall need many a still hour, and to retreat often into the sacred privacy of our own souls where we can be face to face and heart to heart with our divine Lord.

But what is it to meditate? Having entered upon it, in what ways and to what extent may we reasonably expect to be aided and advanced in our spiritual development by meditation?

In a printed discourse on this subject, Dr. James Martineau was led very naturally to answer these questions. He begins by telling us what meditation is not. It is not *reading;* it is

not *study;* it is not *reasoning;* it is not *deliberation;* and it is not *self-scrutiny.* These are surprising answers; but they are the answers given—emphasis and all. So much is swept away that we wonder what can be left; or what place the mind can hold in the process or state of meditation.

Finding replies so startling, or rather, confusing on the negative side, the question recurs: What is it to meditate? Our author admits that it is "an act of mind." But the mental activity, as he conceives and outlines it, is so thin and vague, so altogether transcendental and dreamy, so up in the air and out in the uncharted spaces, that it is hard to distinguish it from the intoxication of wild rhapsody. This, however, is what he goes on to say; and in saying this he is at once setting forth his idea of what meditation is and what are its rewards: "Its view is not personal and particular, but universal and immense,—the sweep of the nocturnal telescope over the infinitely great. It brings—almost a renunciation of individuality, a mingling with the universe, a lapse of our little drop of existence into the boundless ocean of being. It does not find for us our place in the known world, but loses it for us in the unknown. It puts nothing clearly beneath our feet, but a vault of awful beauty over our heads. It furnishes immediate perception of things divine, eye to eye with the saints, spirit to spirit with God, peace to peace with heaven. In thus being alone with the truth of things, and passing from show and shadow into communion

with the everlasting One, there is nothing at all impossible and out of reach."

Now with all deference to a distinguished and widely cherished name one runs no risk in saying that these statements do not meet the case. On the negative side they are too exclusive and sweeping, while on the positive side they are too indefinite and visionary. The negations eliminate much which ought to be left in; and the affirmations affirm nothing tangible. The upshot of it all is simply falling back into a sweet passiveness, or floating off on the wings of fancy into the vague realms of dreamland, or giving the imagination up to the enjoyment of rapt and delicious experiences.

There can be no doubt of the rare blessings which may come to one, or rather which surely will come to one, in the way of inward peace, of exalted and satisfying emotions, and of fresh insight and broadened views, through just opening the mind and heart to God, and lying still in His arms as a child falls back in a mother's arms, and letting Him calm the agitations of the mind and whisper His sweet secrets into the soul.

All the same this is not meditation. It is akin to it, and may be the fruit of it. But meditation in any true sense of the term it is not. It is rather surrender to the overbrooding of divine influences. It is lying fallow for enrichment. It is opening the windows of the whole nature that fresh air may pour in. It is doing what the lily does when it gives way to the light and coaxing warmth of the morning sun, and permits it to trace lines of beauty and grace on its fair petals. There are

times and seasons when all this is profitable above measure.

To meditate, however, is to think,—to think down into things, to think out through things, and to think to some rational purpose and conclusion. The same faculties which are employed in study, in reasoning, in deliberation, and in self-scrutiny, are in use, and no whit less in use, in the act of meditation. Only in meditating there is an implication of withdrawal from the noise and distraction of the world, that one may be alone with himself and free to follow where his reflections may lead. There is the further implication that in meditating the topic is usually a religious one.

Still, whether these implications have any significance or not, the thinking which has to do with spiritual culture, and through spiritual culture with moving forward into partakership in the divine nature, has two factors—God and the soul. Involved in these two factors, and playing back and forth between them, there are any number of questions of vital import and pressing urgency. But the all-embracing and dominant factors are God and the soul. It is on these—their meaning and their relations—that we are to meditate, and by meditating to find the spiritual profit and comfort which we seek. We can doze and dream and float with these themes in mind, and have nothing come of it; but if we make God and the soul objects of severe contemplation, and get into close grips with them, they will mean inspiration and uplift to our whole being.

Consider some of the questions which will be

sure to leap to the lips in a mood of deep, sincere, and earnest meditation. Who is God and what does He mean to me? Who am I and what does my life here on earth signify? Is the soul a fancy, or is it a reality? Is this life all, or is there another life out beyond? Has God manifested Himself in Jesus Christ, and has Jesus Christ through an experience of His loving grace demonstrated to my inner consciousness that He is the way, the truth, and the life? Is there something better and higher for me than I have yet attained? Are my faults and failings, my shortcomings and my easily besetting sins, as offensive to me as they ought to be? Are love and truth the open highways of duty and service, as alluring to me as they might be expected to be to a disciple of the great Teacher and an heir of the everlasting inheritance? Am I measuring up to any worthy standards of character, and illustrating loyalty to the most commanding ideals and ends of life? Are my aspirations in line with the will of the Eternal Righteousness, and am I pursuing objects which have on them now and forevermore the divine benediction?

True, these and similar questions are appropriate to self examination, and might well be put to his own heart and conscience by one having the courage and desire to see himself in the light of Him who lifts up His countenance upon us. They are also pertinent to the mood of meditation; and the more direct and searching they are the more helpful the meditation.

It is absurd to conclude that we must put our

minds in quarantine in order to carry on a series of successful meditations. The mind is to be vigorously active—alert to needs and responsibilities, and awake to the demands of truth—if we are to get the best results from our still hours. In fact we get away by ourselves—away into ourselves—that we may think, may face conditions as they are, and draw wholesome inferences from the facts of the situation. It is in these moments of inward retirement from the world and sober reflection, that the still, small voice becomes audible, and the enlightening presence of the Spirit is realized. Out in the bustle and confusion of affairs, it often seems incongruous to be asking questions about the deepest things of the soul; but in the hours of quiet separation from outward contacts and activities, the most thoroughgoing and penetrating questions almost ask themselves. "And Jacob was left alone." He was alone when in his dream he saw the angels of God ascending and descending. He was alone when he wrestled until the breaking of the day for the divine blessing. When "he went on his way," from the vision of the ladder onward to the end, it was in the strength of great experiences.

Aside from the incessant and tremendous pressure brought to bear upon us by the material activities and influences of the time, though incidental to it, if not indeed a vital part of it, there is another commanding reason why we should stop and think—stop often and think seriously—with a view to seeing clearly where we are and what we are doing and becoming. It is the danger to which

neglect of habitual and honest meditation on things of the inner life exposes us of losing all desire of being left to ourselves, and all capacity for finding satisfaction and profit in still hours and solitary thinking.

Gibbon, in speaking of Diocletian, and the way in which he carried himself during the nine years following his abdication, says: "It is seldom that minds, long exercised in business, have formed any habits of conversing with themselves." This is true; but the statement has a very much wider reach than is here given to it. It is not alone national rulers who have long been charged with the grave affairs of state, nor generals of disbanded armies, nor the successful leaders of great commercial enterprises, who find it hard to turn their thoughts inward and hold intercourse with their own souls; but men in general find the task of sober, sincere, and protracted reflection an irksome one. They are ready — the most of them at any rate — to mount towers and take sweeping outlooks on the world; but they shrink from searching inlooks. A weekly paper called *The Inlook* would have very few subscribers. Sometimes ashamed to do it, sometimes too cowardly to do it, sometimes lacking in interest to do it, men hesitate to face themselves just as they are. Not a few know that there are skeletons in the closets of their hearts, and they do not like to open the doors and let in the light. They are caught in the web of their own devices, and are wanting in moral pluck to try to escape. None the less the quiet searching of the inward eye is essential not

only to peace and growth, but to safety. The mariner who would take his ship safely into harbor must keep close watch on his compass. The merchant who would succeed in business must look well to daily outgoes and incomes, and at stated periods take careful account of stock. It is not otherwise with one who would enter the haven of rest, or succeed in the high undertaking of living a right life. The soul must have trysting places with God, and hours for looking inward and upward or the spiritual faculties wither and die. We can keep the spirituality that we have only by getting more. The children of the Father who would be more like the Father, the disciples of the Lord who would be more like their Master, must often "be alone in deep mid-silence, open-doored to God."

It is to the Mystics that we turn for the best examples of meditation, and also for the best illustrations of the perils of meditation when divorced from the habit of useful activity. There is a mystical piety that is not good, just as there is a pragmatic bustling that is not good. What is wanted is a blend of the good qualities of each so that the world may be supplied with the necessary contingent of devout workers. No man ever goes down deep into religious experience without exposing himself to the charge of mysticism. It is claimed that Paul and Edwards both belong in the ranks of the mystics. On the other hand, no mystic ever rises to heights of composure, of quietude and trust, of serene and blessed intercourse with the Father of our spirits, without

leaving the way to these same heights wide open to all who wish to follow. The way of the Lord is not a private turnpike. Approaches to the divine ear are not a monopoly. No man holds a patent on the best methods of entering into fellowship with God and of drawing supplies from the rich storehouse of His grace. The fruits of His garden may be freely plucked by anybody who loves Him and wants to be nourished by His bounty. Martin Luther drank from the same fountain at which John Tauler quenched his thirst. The difference between them was that the reformer was less inclined than the mystic to fall back into an attitude of passive waiting on God in order to realize the highest religious enjoyment, and more inclined to ascribe his pardon and justification to what Christ had done for him than to what Christ had done in him. John Wesley was not without experiences which made him near of kin to Bernard of Clarevaux; and Philip Doddredge knew the close intimacy with Christ which made Fénelon eminent in the calendar of devout souls.

There is no difference in kind between the deep religious experiences of mystics and the deep religious experiences of other Spirit-filled believers. The mystic comes into his peace, his submissive trust, his clarified vision, his exalted fellowship with God, his hold on things invisible to mortal sight, largely through his habit of meditation, and the wise use of quiet hours. He knows the advantage of "sequestration from the world." This is largely the secret of a Thomas à Kempis and

of a Francis de Sales; and it is also largely the secret of a David Brainerd and an Edward Payson.

In a passage in his *New England Tragedies* Longfellow has put thoughts into the mouth of Wharton, the Quaker, which have not only a fitness to him, but a special bearing on the point here urged. This is what he makes him say:

> "Let us, then, labor for an inward stillness,
> An inward stillness and an inward healing:
> That perfect silence where lip and heart
> Are still, and we no longer entertain
> Our own imperfect thoughts and vain opinions,
> But God alone speaks in us, and we wait
> In singleness of heart, that we may know
> His will, and in the silence of our spirits
> That we may do His will, and that only."

He presses this on the strength of what has been said before:

> "And as the flowing of the ocean fills
> Each creek and branch thereof, and then returns,
> Leaving behind a sweet and wholesome savor;
> So doth the virtue and the life of God
> Flow evermore into the hearts of those
> Whom He hath made partakers of His nature."

In the first of these selections we have the ideal of open-mindedness toward God. It is the Mystic or Quietist conception of the proper attitude to take, if we would have the peace that passeth understanding, the guidance we need from on high, and the blessed assurance that makes one brave and true in all the exigencies of life. It is the

mood of "inward stillness" in which it is easy for the child to receive what the Father has to give. In the second selection we have the explanation of it all. Those who exemplify this "perfect silence," this "singleness of heart," and "do His will," have had their lives made channels through which the life of God could flow. They were not born—they were new-born—into this state. They opened their minds to God, they surrendered their wills to His will, and they coworked with Him in His making them partakers of the divine nature. Notice how Wharton puts it:

"Let us, then, *labor* for an inward stillness."

This "inward stillness" will not come of itself. There must be an intellectual and spiritual outreach for it, an opening of the mind to receive it; or a distinct effort to realize this attainment of acquiescence and joy in the divine will.

So we come back to the proposition in hand that meditation—meditation on God and the soul habitual, severe, and often prolonged, is not alone a method, but an essential condition of progress and joy in spirituality. We must think on these things.

There are reasons, many and plausible, why a person who is conscientious and in earnest, may hesitate before venturing to devote much time and strength to meditation. When one sits down and calmly surveys the field and takes account of the work which ought to be done, it seems al-

most wicked to spend a moment of time in any other way, or to divert an ounce of strength to any other end, than just doing and still doing to improve life and the conditions of life. A sensitive person often finds it hard to escape the torment of a guilty conscience when he realizes how much hunger there is to be fed, how much nakedness there is to be clothed, how much ignorance there is to be enlightened, how much disloyalty to God there is to be corrected, and at the same time also realizes how little he himself is really accomplishing in the line of these sacred tasks. Besides it is possible for any single individual to exert wholesome influence, to promote the welfare of mankind, and to lend a hand in the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness in the earth to an extent altogether impossible in any yesterday of our race. In cities, in remote and neglected corners of the nations, in the heart of dark continents and at the far-off ends of the globe, one can make his personal presence tell, and his thought tell, and his means tell, with a quickness and certainty almost incredible.

But this impatience is not wise. It is the impatience of the student who wishes to throw away his books and at once take up the business of life. Or it is the impatience of the professional or business man who keeps ever at his tasks without relaxation or refreshment of body and mind. This is never good policy. Doing exhausts; if there is nothing but doing it will not take long for the exhaustion to become utter. Bodies cannot be all the time on the stretch without peril. The strong-

est have to renew their strength by sleep and food. It is the same with minds. Be the brain never so healthy in its working, it must have seasons of rest and recuperation. Before the surgeon can cut successfully he must have a fine edge on his knife, and the fine edge on the knife requires time and skill. To use knowledge one must first have knowledge; and knowledge in clear, firm grasp means days and years given over to hard study. An army that does not look well to its supplies will not be very long in condition to fight and win battles. The faucets will furnish us no full measure of water when the reservoirs are no longer filled through the pipes which run out into the depths of the great lake. The earth will yield small increase from harvest to harvest without intervening months spent in filling all her pores with moisture distilled out of the heavens.

We do our appointed work best when we do it with the fresh strength derived from intimate fellowship with the Father. We get closest to men when we have been closest to Christ. The Son of God faced, not only the sublimest, but the most difficult undertaking which this earth ever knew; but He took time to rest, to meditate, and to be alone with Him who sent Him.

But highest and best of all, these seasons of receptivity, when we lie open-windowed in all our faculties to God, take us on with an unquestionable certainty into likeness to God. We not only come to know Him better, and to think His

thoughts and to feel His feelings after Him more perfectly; but we are helped into a deeper partakership in His divine nature, and a completer identification with Him in all the outgoings of His mind and heart.

VII
RENDERING SERVICE

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

—*Jesus, The Christ.*

"Always abounding in the work of the Lord."

—*The Apostle Paul.*

"The privilege of laboring is to me increasingly precious.—Life seems more and more a blessing on account of its labor and not as a period of rest."

—*Mary Lyon.*

"When a man turns from evil and takes hold on good, there is to be more than meditation or wishing or willing; there is to be expression. Even thinking cannot be clear until it has had expression.—So it is with all the inward feelings; expression gives them full development. Thought is the blossom; action is the fruit behind it."

—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

"Gregory the Great said, that to live in indolence was to rest the head on soft earth, not on a stone, and so to see no angels;—and that the active and contemplative life were like the two eyes, needing to be joined as these are in the face."

—*Richard Salter Storrs.*

"There is a selfishness of a more subtle kind than that which makes us keep a tight hand on our silver and gold. The giving of money may be the discipline of a loftier kind of generosity; but in some cases it seems to be made a substitute for a nobler service. It was not mere money that Christ gave when He became poor to enrich the human race; and if the power of His example and of His spirit rests upon us we shall give, and give freely, what we value infinitely more than money."

—*Robert William Dale.*

VII

RENDERING SERVICE

SERVICE is a word written large in the ethics of the Gospel. In both His teaching and His life Jesus gave an infinite dignity to service; and He imposed the obligations of service on all who would be His followers. He said come —come to me, and find forgiveness and rest and guidance and motive force, and what it means to be a child of the Father. He also said go—go out amongst men who are blind and wayward and wide astray and wrong far beyond their own consciousness, and labor to recall them to right thinking and right living. He was the Sent One. His disciples are likewise sent. No man who has named the name of Christ is without a mission. To believe in Christ is to come under a moral imperative to work for Christ.

The Apostles were quick to translate their lives in the Lord into terms of helpful activity. "Paul a *servant* of Christ"—one, that is, who felt not only pledged, but bound to serve Him. "James a *servant.*" "Simon Peter a *servant.*" "Paul and Timothy *servants.*" As to Paul, he made this relation to Christ still more emphatic by saying at the close of his letter to the Galatians: "*I bear the marks of Jesus branded on my body.*"

Martin Luther was in exact line with all this

when he began his short treatise on Christian Liberty by saying: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one." This was only another way of stating what the great Apostle had stated before him when he declared that, though he was free from all men, he yet made himself servant of all. Both men knew their rights; but they laid the stress on self-denial, on self-devotement, on service to the limit. Martin Luther, like Paul, was a *servant* of Christ.

In the upper chamber Jesus assured the little group who were about Him, and to whom, so far as human agency is concerned, was to be committed the destiny of the good news, that He was no longer to call them servants, but friends. It must have been sweet, inspiring, and in every way strengthening to the disciples to hear these words, and to know that ever after, if they did their best to be worthy of their high calling, they were to sustain to the divine Master the intimate and exalted relations of friendship. Not servants, but friends; and this was to carry in it the full measure of confidence and joy which the relation implies.

Still without discrediting the assurance of the Master, and without undervaluing the sweetness and sacredness of the high relationship into which He had lifted them, His followers kept on calling themselves "servants." In virtue of their discipleship they were to serve. They were to express their faith, show their loyalty, demonstrate

their love, and set forward the Kingdom for whose coming He had taught them to pray by service. They were to be laborers in the vineyard—doers of the word and not hearers only, helpers of men into the new life.

It is no wonder. They knew that Jesus, the Christ, had taken upon Himself the form of a servant. They knew that according to the law of precedence in the Kingdom the way to be greatest was to be a servant. They knew that the final award was to turn on the consideration of fidelity in service. It is the faithful servant who is to hear the "well done." Some of those who were close to Jesus on that memorable night of the Last Supper had an idea, or at any rate came to have an idea, that there will be service—refined, exalted, ennobling and glorious service—to be rendered in the world to which we go. Whether the service in the life to come, as the apostle conceived it in his apocalyptic vision, is simply adoring worship, or that and very much more, we may be sure that it will be a service suited to the new environment of the soul and the vastly higher ranges which will be opened to thought and activity. His servants shall do Him service, and they shall see His face.

But what are the services we are to render? If it is our purpose to become more and more like God in love and purity and helpfulness, along what lines are we to work?

Christ would seem to have made this clear. If we follow Him in His teaching and aims, and at the same time make sure of expending our

thought and energy in directions which will be of greatest advantage to our spiritual development, there are two general ends on which we shall concentrate effort.

The first one of these has to do with individuals. It is the service of personal evangelism, or winning men—this man, that man, the other man—into the faith of the Son of God, and thus putting them in the way of doing the divine will and enjoying the divine fellowship both for the here and the hereafter.

In addition, but close akin to this, it is taking those who are already in the faith, and giving them an increasingly intelligent idea of what faith means, and what it calls for in the way of earnest, consistent and consecrated living. It is leading men into the faith, and it is teaching them how to walk, work, grow, and do valiant deeds by faith.

It will be said that this is individualistic. No matter. This is the initial move and stress must be laid upon it. Near at hand and open to all, not to say binding on all who have come into the discipleship of our Lord, work for individuals is a form of service which may not be omitted in our programs of Christian activity.

There is the more need of urging this for the reason, that, under present day influences and tendencies, less importance is attached to this form of effort than was formerly done. Or rather, perhaps, other forms of work are now over-magnified at the expense of this. Here lies a peril. Here is disclosed the weak link in the chain of endeavor with which we are trying to draw the world to

Christ to-day. We are not aiming at individuals —not pushing with all our might to secure individuals. We see men grouped and our vision is diffused over the mass. It is no longer the quiet and direct method of man with man; no longer the old Prophet bending over the one sick child; no longer Andrew seeking his brother Simon; no longer Jesus talking with the despised Woman at the Well, which satisfies us. We want something larger, more imposing, more dramatic, and less taxing, it may be, to nerve and energy than gaining recruits for righteousness one by one.

But working for individuals, seeking to regenerate society through the intellectual and moral quickening of the individual members of society, are schemes in harmony with the methods of Jesus, with the every-day policies of life, and with the history of the progress of civilization. Whether they come by the thousands, as under the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, or by the tens of thousands, as under the instruction and influence of Titus Coan and his associates in the Sandwich Islands, it is always an individual matter. The tongue of flame settled upon *each of them.*

Jesus gathered His disciples about Him, set up His church, organized the apostolate after the individual plan. There were times when multitudes thronged about Him and heard His words. Still it is surprising as well as instructive to see how large a part of the work of Jesus which went to the making of history was with individuals. He started the most stupendous enterprise of all time by

winning adherents to Himself and His cause—one by one.

The more sane and able of our latest writers on the relation of the church to the betterment of society are free to admit this. They insist on much beyond this; but they concede the claim that progress must start with individuals.

Rev. Frank I. Paradise, in his recent interesting volume on The Church and The Individual, says: "The function of religion is to deal primarily with individuals." He adds: "But the salvation of individuals in the Christian faith is a social process." Be it so. The business begins with individuals. He says again: "The student of social conditions cannot take his eyes from the individual members of society."

Professor Rauschenbusch, in his stimulating and much quoted work on Christianity and The Social Crisis, makes this statement: "It has always been recognized that the creation of regenerated personalities, pledged to righteousness, is one of the most important services which the church can render to social progress." He follows this with the further statement: "But regeneration merely creates the will to do right; it does not define for a man what is the right." Granted. All the same is not "the will to do right" the initial and indispensable factor in right doing?

Really, however, there is no ground for controversy here. Our brilliant author, in one of the most effective passages of his book, speaks of the new society which Jesus came to establish as an "organic growth." It was to be built up "cell by

cell." So it has been. Each new life brought under the control of the new spirit embodied and revealed in Jesus has marked an advance of the Kingdom. So it ever will be. By so much as any soul in any remotest corner of the globe is out of harmony with God, by so much is the coming of the Kingdom delayed. To increase the number of individual believers is to register growth for the Kingdom.

People who have small inclination, or as they try to persuade themselves, little aptitude for this kind of work, are prone to think that winning men just one by one into loyalty to Christ and His ideals is a slow and unpromising way of saving humanity. Practically the same conclusion is reached by people who are over-eager for immediate and large results. They want methods with more sweep in them,—schemes of aggression, as has been said, that are larger, more imposing and dramatic. They are disappointed if they do not get astonishing harvests from a single sowing. The business according to their conception ought to be conducted on a wholesale basis. They are sure there must be some short-cut to the gathering in of the masses and the regeneration of cities and nations. Then, just now, there is a noise, not of war, but of strenuous activity in the camp. Movements and enterprises of moment, some of them looking to the increased efficiency of the church and the various organizations within the church, and some of them having in mind the social and ethical regeneration of communities, are attracting attention and engaging the active in-

terest of large and increasing numbers. For the most part all this is well. But it is not always easy to withdraw the eye from a grand and imposing vision and fix attention and concentrate effort on some small bit of work with which we are in close touch, and on the faithful doing of which depends the realization of the larger conception which has captured the imagination.

But while maintaining interest and co-working with others in the projects and campaigns which our leaders may launch from time to time, we are to see to it that the unit of society is not overlooked. Even our scientists in the department of plant life, like Professor Coulter, for instance, of the University of Chicago, are now declaring that a field of oats or corn or wheat or cotton cannot be improved permanently by what is called the mass method, but only as the experimenter works through individual plants, or by pedigree. This is the secret and the arithmetic of success in filling the earth with the knowledge of the truth, and establishing an enduring righteousness among men. It is this *one*, that *one*, the other *one*, led into the faith, which sets Christianity forward and gives promise of the universal reign of Christ. Harold Begbie, in his fresh and stirring book on *Souls in Action*, puts it all in a nutshell when he says: "By saving men individually the Church saves society; and by saving society she brings millennium." In another passage he says: "The moral atmosphere of a place is produced by the soliloquies of the soul." The individual thought or spirit or aim or character combined

and fused make the aggregate thought or spirit or aim or character of a community. A truth so plain ought not to need repetition; but somehow it has to be said over and over again—one by one.

No kind of work for Christ is more imperative, has more promise in it, or is more fruitful in blessing to one's spiritual life, than earnest and well-directed attempts at individual evangelism,—this one soul face to face and in close grip with that one soul. He that reapeth receiveth wages. Were more of this work done; more time and strength given to it, and more thought, prayer, culture and ingenuity brought to bear on it, our church manuals and our year-books would soon begin to bourgeon with foretokenings of a world moving rapidly towards Him who is the Light of the world. It was said of a faithful preacher of the gospel who only recently went to his reward: "It was his chief joy to lead people into a personal knowledge and experience of the loving grace of Jesus Christ." The tribute is one which every preacher ought to aim to deserve. The late Dr. Charles J. Little, in a great address, spoke of Joseph Everett, one of the pioneer preachers of the Methodist Church in America, as a man over whom in his moods of earnest appeal, there "flowed the transfiguring beauty of a quenchless love for souls." Is not this "quenchless love for souls" which illuminates and glorifies the whole personality, not unfrequently with "the coming of the splendor of another world," something to be sought and cultivated? We have splendid ministers,—able in their pulpits, attractive on platforms, and instructive and

helpful through their books; would it not be well if we had more who are as hungry for souls as were Simeon and Payson and Kirk and Cuyler? We have splendid laymen,—men who by skillful and successful leadership are commending themselves to the church and to all who love good causes,—would it not be of untold advantage to the progress of the faith had we more laymen built on the pattern and moved by the spirit of Harlan Page, Hopkins Hadley, Colonel Clark, Hedley Vickors and Moody? Colonel Clark of Chicago had a record of more than eight thousand souls whom he had touched and influenced.

The second of the two general ends to be kept before us is the correction of the abuses and the righting of the wrongs with which society is now burdened. Neither argument nor illustration is necessary to make it evident that Jesus leaned with the whole force of His teaching and the whole weight of His divine nature against inhumanity, injustice, iniquity, crime and vice of every sort and degree. He stood for brotherhood and the square deal,—for the square deal with a very large *plus* of love. He sought to reorganize society on the basis of loyalty to God and the sway of the golden rule. It is not possible to get into an intelligent appreciation of the aim and spirit of Jesus, or into full sympathy with Him in the transformation He wishes to accomplish in the earth, and then just to sit still and let things drift. Public sentiment is to be elevated; equitable laws are to be enacted and enforced; in social life, in the business world, in politics, reforms are to be ac-

complished; and homes, neighborhoods, towns, cities, states, nations, the world, are all to be made better, and more desirable and safer places in which to live.

It may be said that this is socialistic. No matter again. Christ taught us to pray for the coming of the Kingdom and the doing of the divine will in earth as in heaven. It cannot be other than right, or other than duty, to do our utmost to realize this end—our utmost to remove every hindrance to its realization. We are to do our best to make life and all the relations of life out-and-out Christian. We are to make our ideals Christian; our homes and stores and mills and shops Christian; our newspapers, magazines, scientific journals and literature Christian; our schools, libraries, art institutes, galleries, musical entertainments and popular shows Christian; our banks and corporations Christian; our political policies and methods, our legislative action, whether in town meetings or city councils or state legislatures or national congresses, Christian. We are not to rest content until wealth, genius, culture, and ambition are all informed with the mind of Christ. There must be no truce with the dark side of things until some sort of adequate mastery has been obtained over the appalling array of evils which now menace the peace and well-being of society,—the Black Hand murder plots, the arson conspiracies, the drunkenness, gambling, sexual corruption, bribery, perjury, lying, stealing, unfaithfulness to trusts—private and public, and the moral recklessness in general which

characterizes such large sections of our large cities.

At any rate these and kindred shortcomings and deformities open to us a sphere of service which is at once broad and exigent. No Christian man may refuse to enter it and to work in it up to the full measure of ability and influence. Indeed he must enter it and work in it, or else for very shame stop praying that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Nor let it be forgotten that our attitudes as well as our prayers may be self-stultifying. To ask God to remove iniquities which it is in our power to help remove, and then to fall back into an attitude of inaction and indifference, is to mock God and dishonor our own souls. It avails not that many things are vastly better than they once were, and that there are good grounds for an optimistic outlook on the future. Nor is it a valid excuse for withholding assistance to say that many of the sufferers are themselves responsible to a large extent for the hardships and limitations of life under which they groan. Injustices, foul and threatening, still confront us. Inequalities created by differences in natural endowments, by race descent, and still more by circumstances, await adjustment. Not alone in lands where tyranny and caste still bear sway, but in the most advanced democracies, multitudes of children are born every year under conditions, which, from the hour of birth, practically foredoom them to a destiny of ill-success and desperate misery. Neither heredity nor environment is all,—a human will is a human will—a soul is a

soul—for a' that; but what can naturally, what can logically, be expected of one who has become so habituated to an atmosphere of squalor and vice—so domesticated in vile surroundings and evil haunts, that a home in slums and dismal alleys and fever-haunted basements, and in the midst of associations that are anything but elevating, comes to be tolerable? That is the unutterable pathos of it all—that such an environment can be made to do its mischief so completely as to seem tolerable to a being created in God's image and sent to live its life in God's world.

Now ill conditions are challenges to the better conditioned to rise up and remedy them. Iniquities and wrongs are defiances which men with red blood in their veins and moral fiber in their wills ought to resist to the death. This is a warfare in which there can be no release for a soldier who claims to be of the militant host of the Lord. It is a warfare, too, in which there is needed what one of our great poets has called a "goodby fury." All along the line there is a call for vigorous protest against immorality and dishonesty, and an ungloved handling of the schemers and miscreants who turn life into a carnival of selfishness and lust. The woes of the old prophets against avarice, over-reaching, oppression, sensuality, and inhumanity and wickedness in all their forms, have lost neither their pertinency nor their force,—even as the "blesseds" which fell from the lips of our Lord are not emptied of their divine grace and comfort. Our common every-day life must be made to throb with the vitalities of conscience.

So long as organized capital and organized labor look askance at each other and count their interests antagonistic; so long as superior strength and culture and skill and inherited privileges are used for selfish and not for helpful ends; so long as temptations to self-degradation and base living are tolerated, not to say protected, by the authorities of our great cities; so long as so much of our social life is hollow, flippant and disdainful, and even any considerable section of our business life makes financial success the sole object in view; so long as ill-equipped and corrupt men can buy their way to positions of trust and honor, and city councils and state legislatures and congresses can be turned into instruments of private gain; so long as fresh air and adequate pay and a fair chance in life are denied to honest toilers, be they men, women or children; so long as graft is considered a joke, and public properties and public utilities, are thought to be only spheres for adroit thievery, there will be a service for righteous men to render; and the less they sing "All's right with the world," and the harder they work, the surer we shall all be made to feel that "God's in His heaven," and the better it will be for mankind.

Having said this, which is only a hint of what might be said, it remains to insist that the starting point in Christian service must be with individuals. There can never be a perfect state made up of imperfect citizens. Ideal communities, whether in heaven or on earth, require ideal characters. Get heredity improved. Yes, get environ-

ment improved; get all physical conditions bettered; get lives penetrated with the spirit of humanity; get a finer equity into the distribution of the products of skill and labor; get a warm clasp into the handshake of employer and employed; there is still need of going deeper. The glad and triumphant exclamation of the Psalmist was: "He restoreth my soul!" The alienation from God is in the soul. The springs of life are in the soul. The new heavens and the new earth turn on the right relation of the soul to God. Artists restore pictures. Architects restore decayed temples, churches and sacred shrines. God restores ruined souls; and through the restoration of ruined souls a broken and discordant society can be restored, or built up, whichever way we choose to put it. Do what we will we are only playing on the surface of social regeneration until souls are set right with God.

Here, then, we have two general lines along which we are to render service, if we would develop our own spiritual life, and at the same time make the world better. How are these suggestions to be made effective? What must be our qualifications—our attitude and spirit—if we would score victories of the kind indicated?

For one thing we are to live our lives on high levels. Good men and good women are in themselves of marked value to the progress of the Kingdom. It is not an exhaustive statement of duty, but it is nevertheless true that one of the most serviceable things which the average man can do for his day and generation is to live a sweet,

clean life,—a life hid with Christ in God and made luminous by the indwelling and outshining of the Spirit. This means sincerity of heart, truthfulness in speech, clean hands, and loyalty to the highest ideals of conduct and character. It means meeting every obligation and performing every task on the basis of strictest honesty. Upright living, in however humble a sphere, always tells for uprightness everywhere.

Men of integrity are not always appreciated,—often they are set aside and cruelly martyred; but their lives count, and help to swell the sum of virtue. So, too, men who are mean and narrow and selfish, independent of what they may do or fail to do in any given instance, exert an influence, and by so much lower the tone of a whole circle or community. At St. Helena Napoleon said to Gourgaud: "After all, I only care for people who are useful to me, and so long as they are useful." Rosebery very pertinently adds: "His followers were well aware of this principle in Napoleon." In that neat comment we have the disclosure of a well-nigh universal law. Men know their fellowmen. The man who is true, generous, and of fine instincts, be his gifts large or small, be his place in society high or low, is, like God, a power for righteousness. His life is a direct contribution to the welfare and uplift of society.

Hence each man who wishes to render service to the world must see to it that his own life rings true under all tests. Inconsistent living gives a cracked and hollow sound to testimony, and by so much hinders success in work.

To be efficient in service,—especially in the service which expresses and promotes spirituality of a divine type,—one must be a generous giver. There is the less need of pressing this, however, since giving has become such a marked and promising sign of the times. Worthy institutions and good causes are backed as never before with financial aid. Drummond has said that "altruism is always inventive." In nothing has the saying a more complete illustration than in the many new and commendable objects which have been sought out in these recent years for promotion by the lavish use of wealth. Bright and benevolent minds are all the time at work on the problem of the right use of money. Plans are constantly under discussion for increasing both the number of givers and the amounts given.

Still there are two facts which are always in order in discussing the higher uses of wealth.

One is that we cannot be like God unless we are givers, and liberal givers. God is the Eternal Giver. This is one of His glories. His gifts are constant, and beyond numbering. Life and light and all our blessings have their source in Him. An unholy man is unlike God. So is a selfish, grasping, penurious, stingy man.

The second of these two facts is that if we would be helpers in the work of the Lord we must be givers. We must be givers of many kinds and in many directions.

Recall what Dr. Dale says in the paragraph over his name. There are things to be given which "we value infinitely more than money." What

are some of these things? They are what the genuine teacher—Arnold of Rugby—gives to his pupils. They are what the consecrated missionary—Mary Moffat—lavishes on the degraded race in the midst of which she labors. They are what the tender and faithful rescue worker—Robertson of Brighton—whispers in the ear of the wretched street-walker at midnight. They are what the mother—Susanna Wesley—pours out of her own life into the lives of her children. Large contributions—these; and more precious than silver and gold. Of such contributions we are to give freely, and over and over. We are to give of our stored-up vitality, chapters out of our richest experience, generous measures of our skill, vigor, counsel, appreciation, hopefulness, encouragement, sympathy, the glance of a kindly eye, the pressure of a warm hand when nothing more is called for than testimony to kindly feeling. These are all forms of giving.

Just now, however, the thought is of material properties. As upon our physical, mental and moral capacities, so upon our earthly possessions there is to be written—consecrated unto the Lord. According to our wealth, be it large or be it small, we are to aid the causes which we know to be near to the heart of God. Widows' mites are for widows in their poverty, and not for millionaires rolling in luxury. If we have ability and opportunity to make money, or if by inheritance we come into the ownership of money, it is alike our duty and privilege to devote a fair share of it to the sacred ends for which Christ died. Benevolences are moving

in the right direction. The habit of giving is increasing. But the ranks of the rich who are disposed to use their riches, or the bulk of their riches, for the advancement of the Kingdom and the enduring welfare of mankind, are still open for recruits.

A fresh motive to generous giving is the comparatively large results which may be accomplished in these days with a little money. It is said that a dollar will not go so far now as it would once. In meeting the ordinary requirements of life this is true. Is it not also true that in many respects a missionary dollar will go further than ever before? Openings unhindered at home and abroad, increased facilities for getting here and there, experiences vastly widened in administration, invest money with a new promise and power of usefulness. When would a dollar given to city missions in any of our great cities, or dropped into the treasury of a struggling frontier church, or turned over to a school in the south, or added to the assets of a Christian college in Turkey or India or China, have meant more—in many instances so much—as it would mean at this very moment? It is free and wise and habitual giving that will help most effectually to "ring out the narrowing lust of gold" and to "ring in the Christ that is to be."

Added to this there is to be the burning enthusiasm of a compelling purpose and a great joy in scoring progress for the Kingdom. No business man, no scholar, no explorer, no inventor, no specialist in research, no pleasure seeker, ought

to exhibit a zeal surpassing that of a follower of Jesus at work.

To this end it may be that a good many of us will need to refashion both our ideas and our habits of life. Our aims are not high enough. Our hearts are not set on the best objects. Petty delights, passing pleasures, small ambitions, absorb our energies. Flowers attract us; but we are attracted as butterflies and not as bees,—we are not intent on making honey. Greville, his devoted friend and biographer, says of Sir Philip Sidney: "His end was not writing,—but both his wit and understanding bent upon his heart to make himself and others, not in words or opinions, but in life and action, good and great." The Great Teacher said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." We shall not do much to advance the best things, nor to build ourselves up after the divine pattern, until we pitch our lives to the key-note of the Master.

This settled, there must be whole heartedness, eager interest, propulsive ardor, enthusiasm, in the service we are attempting to render. Not to put zeal as well as discretion into our Christian undertakings is to make sure that we shall bring little to pass. What man would succeed in railroading or manufacturing or banking or farming or scientific investigating, if he went moping about it as the most of us go about the business of the Lord?

Gen. Joshua L. Chamberlain declared that when he "was called into the service of his country he answered with the best there was in him." It

was the way to answer the call to a patriotic duty; and it is the way to answer a call of God. Life is to be put into it. Richards said, so Samuel J. Mills tells us, "that in case all other means should fail him of getting to the heathen in Asia, he was ready to pledge himself that he would work his passage to India, and then throw himself, under Providence, on his own resources, that he might preach the gospel to the heathen." That was determination kindled to white heat. Livingstone's prayer was that the Lord would enable him to consecrate his whole being to the purpose for which he had gone to Africa; and in answer to their request to know whether he was willing to undertake a service in which they were deeply interested he wrote to his Directors in London that he was ready "to go anywhere provided it was forward." He was in his work—the Lord's work—heart and soul. Mary Lyon once wrote: "Had I a thousand lives, I could sacrifice them all in suffering and hardship for the sake of Mount Holyoke Seminary. Did I possess the greatest fortune, I could readily relinquish it all, and become poor, if its prosperity should demand it." That was consecration; that was devotion; that was a fire in the bones; that was flaming enthusiasm.

The trouble is that we try to make of our religion an easy affair. But an easy religion is no religion. Think of the "mind" that was in Jesus and that controlled Him! Think of the conception of his work which ruled in Paul's life! "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so

that I might finish my course with joy." "Don't trifle—don't trifle" was what the picture of Henry Martyn was always saying to that eminently devout and earnest man of God, Charles Simeon.

VIII

RIGHT USE OF SORROWS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

—*Jesus.*

"For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

—*The Apostle Paul.*

"Nothing brings us to our 'Father who art in heaven' like the failures of our earthly supports and the gathering forces of irresistible foes."

—*Cyrus Hamlin.*

"Things which never could make a man happy, develop a power to make him strong. Strength and not happiness, or rather only that happiness which comes by strength, is the End of human living."

—*Phillips Brooks.*

"The great singers of the mystery and pathos of human loss, Dante in his 'Vision,' Milton in 'Lycidas,' Mathew Arnold in 'Thyrsis,' and Tennyson in 'In Memoriam,' all show us that for highest vision there is no medium like that of tears."

—*J. M. Blake.*

"The most fruitful and valuable hours, those which give most impetus to the inner life, are, as a rule, not the pleasant hours of enjoyment and mirth, but the grave and serious hours, days of woe and nights of tears, times of struggle and privation, the memory of which one would not part with at any price."

—*Ernest A. Tappert.*

VIII

RIGHT USE OF SORROWS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

THE world is bright and sweet. There is more joy in it than sorrow. Smiles outnumber tears, and glad hearts make a longer roll than sad ones.

Still there is a measureless amount of pain to be endured. If there is song, there is also wailing. If there are victories, there are also tragedies. If there are festivities when mirth and gayety rule the hour, and all spirits are light, there are also circles which are shadowed with the gloom of bewildering bereavements. Humiliations, defeats, thwartings and losses beyond numbering, and distresses and agonies the keenest, enter into the daily experiences of multitudes of men and women. Strokes and afflictions which arrest the currents of life, and sunder ties the most intimate and sacred, and break up plans which are like the blotting of the sun out of the heavens, are the recurring incidents of an earthly lot. For many the whole life is one round of burden-bearing and abject poverty. Environment imprisons in helplessness and despair millions upon millions. Belated races and oppressed peoples groan and travail in pain together. Rachel weeping for her children is an act always on the stage. Comfort ye, Comfort ye my

people, is an injunction for which there is constant occasion.

How are these sorrows and disappointments to be met? Is there any use which can be made of them in the moral development and enrichment of the soul? Are pains and defeats, are the smitings of misfortune and the blinding tears of grief schools in which lessons of abiding significance and value to the spiritual life can be learned? Is there in torturing maladies and life long hindrances, as in the sudden shocks of disaster and the consuming heats of fiery furnaces into which brave souls are sometimes thrust, a discipline of the inner man which in the end at least may reconcile one to all its costs? Or, if the results here indicated are not always secured, and chastening does not always issue in a clearer and wider vision, in a submissiveness deeper and more unquestioning to the divine will, in more fruitfulness and joy in the spiritual life, and in a closer walk with God, are the general tendencies of chastening in this direction?

All depends on the attitude which the sufferer may take, or which he may be led to take, towards the suffering into which he may be brought. Our sufferings must be used in the right way.

There are three ways in which disappointments, pains, losses and afflictions may be met and borne. Whether they aid in equipping us with the vigor which our cherished poet had in mind when he urged us to "suffer and be strong," or have any important share in working out for us "the eternal weight of glory" of which the great apostle

speaks, depends entirely on which one of the three ways we choose to make our way of receiving them.

One may be hardened by afflictions and sorrows. In too many instances this is permitted to be the effect of them. Trials and adversities are misinterpreted; and hence awaken only feelings of impatience and discontent and fault-finding. Instead of mellowing and fertilizing the soil of the spiritual nature, they sap all moisture out of it, and leave it dry and parched. They are received in a way to deaden the sensibilities, sour the temper, narrow the sweep of wholesome sympathy, dull the edge of activity in things good and helpful, stifle worthy aspirations, cloud the face of the skies with frowns, and make one short-visioned, small, peevish, bitter, pitiably selfish, and sometimes openly rebellious. Day is turned into night. The sweet fountains of the better nature are all dried up. Birds no longer sing in the soul and flowers no longer blossom in the garden of the heart. God's goodness is called in question or openly denied.

It is not an uncommon thing to hear persons whose plans have been suddenly overturned, or who are in straitness and pain, break out with the impatient exclamation that things might have been ordered differently. The skill and power, so it seems to them in their hours of defeat and trouble, which were equal to the task of making a world such as this in which we live, and a universe such as this of which our world is a part, might have given us a system free from the liabilities to

suffering and disaster which are involved in the present system. Why not a World-Scheme from the hands of our Master-Builder free from all severe tasks, from all discomforts and crushing burdens and bitter agonies of body and soul? How easy, so these reconstructers of things as they are, it would have been for Him whose mind is infinite in its reach and capabilities to think out and arrange a habitation for His creatures in which there should be no exposure to fatal temptations, no chance for frightful disasters, no consuming sicknesses with their attendant disabilities, and none of those sharp heart-breaks and home-breaks which are so overwhelming to the spirit; and they cry out against it all as if God were cruel to the beings so sensitive to pain whom He had called into existence.

But this does no good. It changes nothing,—nothing except for the worse. For its reaction on the soul is harmful—often exceedingly harmful. It benumbs the feelings, beclouds the judgment, closes the approaches of the soul to delicate spiritual communications, and puts one in wrong relations with God, with life, and himself.

Recall Job's wife. When calamities, startling and smiting, had fallen upon the old Patriarch, and his body was inflamed with repulsive sores, her counsel was: "Curse God—and die." It was a dreadful emotion to entertain—a dreadful position to take. But she had permitted her sorrow to obscure her confidence in the divine wisdom and love. She had allowed these sharp overturnings to confuse her mind. She could see no good—

nothing but cruelty and undeserved rebuke in these successive and strange disasters. Hence her wild and passionate outbreak, her mad, defiant protest, and her blasphemous suggestion. She did not ask what might be the meaning and purpose of the blows which were falling so thick and fast on this good man; nor did she try to turn them to any profitable account. Her only thought for Job was to have him escape these mysterious and destructive afflictions by a swift and defiant escape from life. "Curse God—and die!"

Again one may be mellowed for a little by sorrows and disappointments, and brought to tender feelings and good resolutions; and then when the pinch is over, or the grief has subsided, lapse back into the old ways.

Bunyan tells us that "Mr. Badman, when he was drunk, tumbled off his horse and broke his leg. His conscience smote him a little, but became quiet as his leg grew better." "At another time," so he adds, "he fell very sick, and again repented; for he thought he was going to die." On recovery, however, all his better impulses and fine resolves faded into thin air. He laid his troubles to heart; but not enough to heart to make them curative of his evil tendencies and vices. He was a pocket edition of Pharaoh; and he acted as multitudes of others have acted under the stress of sharp afflictions.

It is needless to say that sufferings met in this fashion will not lead on to a better life. They will not yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The distress is self-centered, narrow, noisy; and

like a summer brook it is soon dried up. The anxiety is about things, and not about life and its elevation; and the struggle is to get into an easier condition and more comfortable circumstances. The discipline awakens feeling; but the feeling is like a mirage in a desert—a reflection of the reality, but not the reality itself. It is Hosea's Morning Cloud that drifts away without fulfilling its promise. It is the smart of a deranged and sensitive spot in the body, and not the smart of a pricked conscience. There is a difference between tears which are dreaded because they wet the cheeks and threaten the complexion, and tears which can be used by divine grace for purifying the heart. When repentance under strifes and afflictions goes so far as to include acknowledgment of the truth and a yearning desire for fellowship with things which are unseen and eternal, it is genuine and to the last degree helpful. Godly sorrow is to be distinguished from all other sorrow by the fact that it works repentance unto life. If the repentance is simply regret over discomforts and losses and humiliations, it is a hollow beating of the air. Gray, in his Hymn to Adversity, magnifies the discipline, stern and relentless, of what he calls this "Tamer of the human breast;" but he neglects to say that if we would learn the lessons taught in this severe school we must be willing and not rebellious pupils. In creatures of free will hearts may grow hard as well as soft; and hard hearts mean spiritual death.

Still again, as this leads to saying, one may take such an attitude towards the ill events and

hard turns in life that they shall become his allies in the struggle to realize moral and spiritual ideals.

There are three grounds for this conviction.

It is in this direction that the presumptions lie. Seeing in the present order of things so many wise adjustments of means to ends, and so many tokens of purposed guidance, it is in line with sane logic to infer that no mistake has been made in permitting pains and disappointments, disasters and suffering, to enter so largely and in such a variety of forms into the economy under which we now live; but that these hard and trying experiences have an important disciplinary value, and are charged with beneficent aims. With so many laws in operation and so many subtle forces which were evidently intended to aid in promoting the advancement and welfare of mankind, the conclusion seems natural—not to say inevitable—that obstacles, sicknesses, griefs, trials, pains, defeats, in short, burdens and hindrances of all sorts, have an ethical mission, and an important part to play in the development of our mental and spiritual capacities, and in fitting us to make good the high design of the Author of our being in endowing us with these capacities.

This view is in strict accord with the teachings of the Scriptures. Afflictions, however caused, and in whatever shape they come, not only fall within the sweep of divine providence; but they proceed, in the opinion of the sacred writers, on the distinct assumption that they infold a benevolent purpose. Joseph is a typical instance. "Ye

thought," so he said to his brethren, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good." They thought evil, they did evil; and conscience-smitten and prostrate there before the brother whom they had betrayed and cruelly wronged, they were overwhelmed with fear. But God, who knows how to overrule bad purposes, and to distill praise to His name from the wrath of man, had a far-off design of good in it; and in His own time and way He made this design evident. How easily Paul falls into the use of universals when speaking of trials. "All things work together for good to them that love God." "All things are for your sakes." "Our light afflictions"—light in comparison with the "eternal weight of glory" towards which they "work"—are kindly and efficient aids to the soul. Distresses and hindrances are not chance emanations from the dust. They are touches of the divine finger, whisperings of the divine voice. Can we ever forget Who it was that was made "perfect through sufferings"? Jesus Christ was honored and exalted—to Him, indeed, it was a testimony of infinite love—in that He was permitted to bear the cross.

Experience certifies to these assumptions and teachings. Prophets, apostles, and saints in all ages, have been more than ready to bear testimony to the medicinal virtues and refining influences of sorrow, and to acknowledge their indebtedness to trouble for new insight into the problems of life, for a better knowledge of the things best worth knowing, and for a closer intimacy with God.

Suffering is very sure to lead us to reflection. Misfortunes, calamities, bereavements, never fail to make sober-minded people still more sober-minded. In a letter written from the scene of war by General Sherman to his wife, in which were tender references to the death of their little boy who had passed away a few days before, he says: "I will try and make poor Willy's memory the cure for the defects which have sullied my character." Whatever may be its effects on plans and conduct in the final outcome in any given instance, there can be no doubt that in general sharp overturnings and griefs do soften the heart. This is one of God's effective ways of appealing to us, and asking questions which go down deep into life.

Severe deprivations and heavy burdens rolled suddenly upon us hardly ever fail to put us in an improved frame of mind toward God.

They give us a quickened sense of dependence on God. Madam Guyon used to insist that no one "can know whether he is really consecrated to the Lord except by tribulations." Dante in his Purgatory speaks of a "good sorrow." Good sorrow becomes best sorrow, and brings forth its most precious fruit, when it shows how indispensable God is to us, and how little advancement we can make in thought and life until we come into a conscious union with Him. We never fully understand what it means to say: "The Lord hath taken away," until we are first established in the fact that it is the "Lord" who "gave." But we are often constrained to the open acknowledg-

ment of the Giver by the sudden taking away of what has been given. Many times are we brought to our Marahs with their bitter draughts before we can reach our Elims with their fresh, cooling waters and their sheltering palms. To be led to see God through swimming eyes and to lean on Him through weaknesses, is to clothe suffering with a high and sacred function. Browning in Paracelsus makes Festus speak of Him who has "made light for him" in darkness as "tempering sorrow" in such a way "that it reaches him like a solemn joy." It shows him God. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,—nevertheless afterward." There are some things which call for tremendous emphasis on "now"; there are other things in which the main stress is to be laid on "afterward."

Along with this quickened sense of dependence on God which is wrought in us by discipline, the way is often opened for us into a new and surprising joy in God. Like passengers in a stanch ship, that, to their surprise, was stanch enough to outride the gale and bring them safe to port, we discover that we did not know God till we knew Him in storms. He afflicts, but not willingly. He afflicts; but in love, and with the purpose of purifying our hearts and drawing us nearer to Him. This discovery, when once made, opens a rift in the cloud, and the face that we thought was dark with frowns is bright with the smiles of a sweet and loving purpose. Dr. Payson, that eminent man of God, is on record with this remarkable testimony. "God has been depriving me of one

blessing after another; but as each one was removed, He came in and filled the gap; and now when I am a cripple and not able to move, I am happier than I ever was in my life before. If God had told me that He was about to make me as happy as I could be in this world; and then said He would begin by crippling me in all my limbs, and removing from me all my usual sources of enjoyment, I should have thought it a very strange method of accomplishing His purpose." So would any of us have thought. Yet this is one of God's ways of getting men to trust Him to the uttermost, and to find in Him their supreme satisfaction and delight. God desires to be first in our affections,—not because He is selfish; not because He wishes to rule in a mere blind and arbitrary way; but for our good. "Whom the Lord loveth."

"Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track;
That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved
His chastening turned me back."

Sorrow is a strong bond of union and a great quickener of sympathy. Not only does it bring us into closer relations with God; but it also draws us near to men. Humanity is one. Ignorance of each other, selfishness, prejudice, indifference, unholy passion, tend to separate us and keep us apart. Common interests, mutual respect, justice, prudence, and other ties, tend to hold us together. But nothing touches the chords of tenderness, uncovers such depths of fellow feeling, brings us so fully heart to heart, and makes even the ends of the earth feel their kinship, so effectually as sor-

row. Wordsworth confesses to the softening influence of suffering when he says:

"A deep distress hath humanized my soul."

Starvation in Russia or China, an earthquake in California or Italy, appalling distempers or disasters in any quarter of the globe, stir the pulse of compassion and secure responses of relief at once from thousands of open hands. Where the Scriptures are known, it is impossible to forget who it is that is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, as it is also impossible to forget how prompt and ample were the ministries of our Lord to all in distress. Were there no suffering in the world we should miss one of the sweetest and most sacred of all the bonds which hold human hearts together. Jesus opened the eyes of the blind; He unsealed deaf ears; He restored the infirm. He wanted clean hearts, sane minds, and sound bodies. These are ends towards which we are all to work. But meantime every cry of pain, every exhibition of distress, every appeal of helplessness, tends to awaken sympathy and to unite the strong and the weak, the fortunate and the unfortunate, in closer bonds. Sorrow initiates into wide fraternities; and it is easier for multitudes to accept Jesus because He was a Man of Sorrows.

In addition to all the considerations now enumerated, it is to be said that the changes wrought by suffering, when suffering is met in the right spirit, advance us into higher views and conceptions of life. Interests and activities take an upward turn, and things are changed for the better.

"The very sorrows I have known," says a recent writer in one of our literary magazines, "have made life worth more to me." The men and women are not few who could bear the same testimony. The temptation is to be mere onlookers in the world, or self-indulgent receivers of such advantages and blessings as society affords; but reverses, especially sharp and bitter reverses, introduce us into the great fellowship of those who have been called to struggle and suffer; and life comes to have for us a deeper and worthier interpretation. Who can listen to the testimony of some of the heart-bruised survivors of the Boxer uprising in China without getting a fresh impression of the purifying and ennobling influences which may be stored up in a great grief!

The world owes much to men who have been overruled in their plans,—disappointed, smitten, persecuted, and used for higher ends than they had previously contemplated, or were willing to subserve. Moses, Paul, Luther, are all shining examples of what failure in well-devised schemes, the arresting hand of an overruling Providence, and cruel misinterpretations and ill treatment, may do to change and elevate aims, and empower for great enterprises and usefulness. Neither the great law-giver, nor the great apostle, nor the great reformer, had his own way, but was constrained to do what he did by interposing and guiding forces from the outside. Sorrow is a skilled oculist that trains the eye to see what else it could not see. It is a musician whose voice charms us into doing what otherwise we should

never have thought of doing. It is a hand reached down out of the heavens to help us climb. Millet declares that "pain is perhaps the thing that gives artists the strongest power of expression." A popular author has said: "The Creator gets the appointed task out of His servants in many ways. It is sufficient to give some of them love, sunrises, sunsets, and primrose woods in spring; others have to be scourged with bloody whips, or driven nearly mad by dreams, sleeping and waking, before they do what God has determined for them." Is not this the story of the Bedford Tinker? Tennyson's great question is:

> "But who shall so forecast the years
> And find in loss a gain to match?
> Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
> The far-off interest of tears?"

The man or woman on whom sorrow has done its divinely commissioned work, and who has been brought by it closer to God, closer to humanity, and into nobler conceptions of life and its privileges and duties, is not without an answer. A gain has been found in loss; and much of this far off interest of tears has been anticipated. Compensations and rewards are not all adjourned to a future life.

But there is no call for further specifications concerning the services rendered by sorrows and disappointments to the soul that is properly exercised by them. They are refiners of the moral and spiritual nature. They are schools of spiritual instruction; and he is but a dull pupil who does

not learn something of more value than gold from pains and defeats.

To many of us it is a hard flight upwards to these outlooks and it calls for much beating of the wings. Thomas à Kempis is to be read with caution; but he is both right and safe when he says: "No evil is permitted to befall thee but what may be made productive of much greater good." Another writer of the same school, Catherine of Siena, has said with equal truth: "We must have perfect trust in God's providence, knowing that all things are not from His ill-will, but love." Milton in *Samson Agonistes* speaks of "Secret refreshings" which come from a "source of consolation" above our earth, and through which our "strength is repaired," and our "fainting spirits are upheld." These secret refreshings are more likely to be experienced in hours of pain and sorrow and darkness than when we are without burdens and free from care. In other words, God suits His aid to our exigencies. Nor can we always understand at once the ins and outs and wherefores of what He does. Once when Martin Luther was very ill, and proof texts were brought to him for correction, he said: "God has touched me sorely. I have been impatient; but God knows better than I do whereto it serves. God is like a printer who sets his letters backwards, so that here we cannot read them. When we are printed off in the life to come, we shall read all clearly and straightforward. In the meantime we must have patience."

Not long ago there appeared in the British

Weekly the lines which follow. They voice a plea for deliverance from pain and its consequences; and they answer that plea by pointing out some at least of the uses and justifications of pain.

Meantime the bearing of this, and of what has gone before, on Spiritual Culture is obvious. No man can come under these ministries of suffering, and learn the lessons of them, without being advanced in likeness to God. But to the lines:

"The cry of man's anguish went up unto God:
'Lord, take away pain—
The shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made,
The close-coiling chain
That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs
On the wings that would soar—
Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made,
That it love Thee the more!'
Then answered the Lord to the cry of His world:
'Shall I take away pain,
And with it the power of the soul to endure,
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity, that knits heart to heart,
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love, that redeems with a price
And smiles at its loss?
Can ye spare from your lives, that would climb unto mine,
The Christ on his cross?'"

IX

COMING UNDER THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth."

—*Words of Jesus.*

"And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer,
Before all temples, the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me . . . what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support."

—*John Milton.*

"The Holy Spirit is God's personal presence in us . . . Our personal life is taken up into God's personal life. It is not . . . that personality is lost. God is personal, and we, even we, His humble children, are personal. But . . . He thinks in us, loves in us, suffers in us. And we know with His own self consciousness . . . We have the mind of Christ."

—*Daniel Mackintosh.*

"Professor James has shown that a study of 'the varieties of religious experience' yields the certainty that we are—consciously or subconsciously—in contact with a 'Something More,' which can become efficient in our life. In Biblical language that 'Something More' is the Holy Spirit."

—*W. L. Walker.*

"The Holy Spirit within us, impelling us to visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, welcome the stranger, care for the poor, is just as truly the Holy Spirit as He is when He helps us to pray and worship."

—*Charles A. Dickinson.*

"A religion without the Holy Spirit, though it had all the ordinances and all the doctrines of the New Testament, would certainly not be Christianity."

—*William Arthur.*

IX

COMING UNDER THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

WHAT is now to be undertaken is not an essay on the general subject of the nature and function of the Holy Spirit. It is rather an attempt to show the necessity there is of falling back on the aid of the Spirit, if one would make headway in spiritual culture. In this kind of culture the assistance of the Spirit is indispensable. Not to seek the Spirit, not to open all the windows of the soul to the light of the Spirit, not to yield to the suggestions and influence of the Spirit, not to co-work with the Spirit in illuminating and purifying the whole inner man—mind and heart alike—is to pursue a policy fatal to all progress in spiritual attainment. Growth in spiritual openness and insight, in spiritual outreach and capacity to apprehend the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and in spiritual fruitfulness and joy, can never be realized without aid of the Spirit.

In general it may be said that the Holy Spirit is always brooding over the world, and always at work in the world. It was the Holy Spirit, or what the writer calls "the spirit of God," that brought order out of chaos at the beginning and gave to the companionship of the stars the wonderful piece of organism which we call our globe.

The Spirit is the agency through which God expressed His thought in creation. Professor Denio, of the Bangor Theological Seminary, in a book which he has entitled "The Supreme Leader," and which is an exceedingly compact and helpful volume, takes this ground. He affirms, as the great writers on the subject before him have affirmed, not only that the Holy Spirit is in the Scriptures still, in life, and in all the relations of life, but that what we call the laws of nature are in effect manifestations of the Spirit. The Spirit is the principle of order and life, so he maintains; and all developments in the physical world and in history are brought about by his agency.

There can be no question of the immanency of God. He is immanent in mind, in matter, in history, in all developments of force and in all forms of life. Is it not by the incessant and universal activity of the Spirit that God makes Himself immanent? Nature is not God; but God is in nature and speaks through the voice of nature. Life is not God; but life is the breath of God. God is all about us in the tireless efficiency and overflow of the Spirit. This was the Psalmist's thought: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" It is the divine in all and over all and everywhere.

But within this wide sweep of the Spirit's presence and activity, there are relations of the Spirit to men and possible services to be rendered by the Spirit to the souls of men, which are much more personal and vital than are indicated in these general statements. In a very literal sense we live and move and have our being in God. We

could not live and move and have our being without Him. It is none the less true that we do not make of God what we might and ought to make of Him in our living. We live in Him, and yet we do not live in Him. He is not the guide of our steps, the strength of our strength, the joy of our joys, the life of our life, as He might be.

Through the Spirit He is ready to lead us into the truth, to aid us in reducing to order the tangle and tumult of our natures, to fill us out of His fullness, to invigorate us with might drawn from the everlasting arm, to anoint our eyes to clear seeing, to attune our ears to the fine delicacy of hearing which will enable us to discriminate between the voices of the noisy world and the still, small Voice, and to kindle aspirations within us which take hold on things divine, and which nothing that is of the earth earthy can ever stifle. Through the Spirit, ministering to us in such large measure as he is more than willing to give, He can make us loyal and resolute servants of righteousness and efficient agents in the setting up of His Kingdom in the earth. That is, He can do all this, and more, if only we will open our minds to the Spirit's teaching, and yield our wills to the divine will. It is not in Him, but in ourselves, that we are straitened. The language used by devout souls sometimes seems extravagant; but God in Christ, God through the Spirit, "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

How the divine will influences the human will; how the divine mind penetrates and instructs the

human mind; how one can know to a moral certainty that the Spirit has spoken to him, or has in any way communicated his thought to him, are questions by themselves and need not long detain us. Mysteries are everywhere and we cannot escape them. Human personalities holding intercourse with each other, the mind influencing will, and will directing and controlling the action of muscles, involve problems quite beyond any easy solution. For all practical purposes it is enough to know that multitudes through these ages,—some of them—the most of them—very simple souls, some of them the cleanest, clearest, and mightiest souls of which we have any record—have borne testimony to the effect that God has somehow had speech with them, or has somehow lighted up their intelligence with sparks from the flame of His own thinking. Or if this is not convincing, we may turn to Christ, and see Him, while yet under earthly limitations, living day by day in unbroken fellowship with the Father.

What, now, to be more definite, are some of the specific ways in which the Holy Spirit aids us in seeking spiritual culture?

The Holy Spirit enlightens.

The essentials of spiritual knowledge are: knowledge of God, knowledge of Christ, knowledge of the Scriptures, and knowledge of the needs and possibilities of our own souls and how we may best realize the true ends of our being. It is the mission of the Spirit to shed light and give sure guidance along all these lines.

As to God, the Spirit searcheth the deep things

of His heart and will, and through his ministry some of these deep things are brought within our apprehension. Concerning Christ, he exalts and glorifies Him to the thoughts of men, and teaches all the things and leads into all the truth which it is necessary for us to know in order to be children of light and heirs of blessedness. It is a vital part of his mission to show us Christ and what His life means to us and to the world. Touching the Scriptures we have only to read them in the illumination of the Spirit to be persuaded that God is in them in a large and peculiar way. Dr. Chalmers has said: "The Bible is like a wide and beautiful landscape, seen afar off, dim and confused; but a good telescope will bring it near, and spread out all its rocks and trees and flowers and verdant fields and winding rivers. That telescope is the 'Spirit's teaching.' " When it comes to self-knowledge, one of the oldest and wisest injunctions of pagan philosophy was that we should know ourselves. Do we ever really know ourselves until we see what we are in the light of the face of God? Do we ever understand our proper relations to life, to our fellow-men, and to the world until we have some adequate understanding of our relations to Him who is the Father of lights? It is the Spirit brooding over us, entering into us, awakening our emotions, kindling the mind to new quests and reflections, through which we are led to sane estimates of what we are and what we ought to be and do. Coming under the Spirit's influence, we come into a right self-consciousness.

The Holy Spirit quickens.

He is the breath of God through which life is communicated to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. With fortunate dispositions and under right training children often grow into discipleship; and men and women who have advanced to mature years without gross departures from high moral standards often unite with the church without any seriously disturbing experiences. But persons who have deeply sinned and have become deeply conscious of their sins, never turn from them—so far as my knowledge goes—without a consciousness of the Spirit's presence and help. The Spirit opens the inward eye, recalls the dismal and humiliating record of the past, begets a sense of ill-desert and shame, in persuasive tones points the way to Him who died for sinners on the cross, and makes the "Come-unto-Me" of our Lord tenderly personal to the distressed soul; and then there is a passing from pain to ease, from darkness to light, from death to life. He that was lost is found. A new name has been written in heaven. But this is simply the initial stage.

It is the mission of the Spirit to impart life, and then to develop life into more and more of life. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. Habitual yielding to the guidance of the Spirit increases alike the assurance, the joy, and the fruitfulness of this sonship. The Spirit dwells in true believers. His indwelling means spiritual enrichment, enlargement, clarified vision, a firmer grasp on the promises, increasing power to resist temptation and over-

come evil, more intimacy of fellowship with Him whom not having seen we yet love, more faith, more adoration, more obedience, and more growth in all the essentials of Christian character. The Spirit makes us increasingly alive to all the great realities. Though men about us may speculate and doubt and question, we have an unction from the Holy One, and know by the unimpeachable testimony of intelligent and valid experiences in multitudes of instances that God is, and that the grace of God in Christ whereby we are saved is not an idle dream, and that we may and do apprehend things which are beyond the range of mortal sight, and cherish expectations that it is wholly reasonable to believe the great future will not show to be groundless. This is not wild fanaticism. There have been any number of religious fanatics. There are men and women still who are the victims of extravagant enthusiasms. Paul and John, however, were not beside themselves. James was cool-headed, and knew whereof he affirmed. The deepest Thinker and the sanest Personality in all history was Jesus of Nazareth.

"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening powers."

The Holy Spirit qualifies us for service, and incites to the doing of things which are for the good of individuals and the progress of the kingdom. The Spirit helps us to be helpers of others.

This is brought about in part by elevating and broadening our sympathies with all classes and

conditions of men. The vision of the angel of God which Cornelius saw coming to him with his message was the work of the Spirit in his soul. The matching vision which Peter saw when the heavens opened and the strange vessel descended before him was the work of the Spirit in his soul. Narrowness was to be overcome and prejudices were to be conquered in order that a signal end might be accomplished and a lesson for the ages might be taught. The centurion of "another nation" and of another way of looking at things, and the apostle of an old race but of a new faith, must be brought together and led to see eye to eye. The prominence given to the Spirit in this whole transaction is significant and impressive. "While Peter thought on the vision the Spirit said unto him: . . . three men seek thee, . . . go with them, . . . I have sent them. . . And he said unto them, . . . God hath shown unto me that I should not call any man common or unclean." The intent of the Spirit in both of these manifestations was realized. The middle wall of partition was broken down. Peter learned that God is no respecter of persons. Cornelius obtained the satisfaction which he craved. From all points of view it was a great achievement. Henceforth it would be an impertinence to talk about limiting the blessings of the gospel to any one race or nation or class or condition. But it was a distinct work of the Spirit; and the all-inclusiveness of the mission of Christ to the world was made clear.

In this connection, and on the warrant of the incidents here cited, it may be said that the Holy

Spirit is often our special guide to the services God would have us render. Philip, for instance, was told by the angel of the Lord to go toward the south. This angel of the Lord was none other than the Spirit of the Lord which also said to him that he was to go near and join himself to the chariot of the Ethiopian. He obeyed with a result which set the seal of authenticity to the message under which he acted. Paul was instructed by the Spirit where to preach and what to preach. He wanted to preach in Asia, to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered him not. His steps were guided into Macedonia. His message also was given to him by the Spirit. "Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth."

Here, as already intimated, we are on dangerous ground. There are visionary visions; and sad work has been done by those who have lent themselves to misleading dreams and shallow delusions. But there are heavenly visions; and it is never well for us to be disobedient to their beckonings. For is it quite conceivable that so much should be said to us about being taught by the Spirit, guided and led by the Spirit, helped by the Spirit, and filled with the Spirit, if no attention is to be paid to the monitions and directions of the Spirit? Is it in keeping with the probabilities, with sound sense and the fitness of

things, that the Spirit which spoke to Philip—to cite him once more—about reaching a certain individual with the message of life, never spoke to Payson, or Finney, or Spurgeon, or Brooks, whose distinct callings were in the same line?

No. The Spirit enters into our minds, awakens interest, kindles love, spurs the conscience, and speaks to us, now softly, now in tones of extreme urgency, about our work, our duties, our opportunities; and we must learn to interpret and to heed the voice of the Spirit. Nothing, we may be sure, which will not be for the ultimate good of men and the glory of God will ever be suggested by the Spirit. But narrow views of things, prejudice, personal taste or convenience, timidity, and the bearing of what we do on our standing in the public estimation, must not be allowed to prevent our yielding to the pressure of the Spirit.

Another way—the most usual and important of all—in which the Spirit aids in qualifying us for service, is by illuminating and invigorating our faculties. A God taught man is an intelligent man. He knows the things best worth knowing. A God-helped man is a strong man. He can stand strains to which other men are unequal. The Spirit does not change a man's natural endowments. A mathematical genius is not changed into a first-class poet or painter by the operations of the Spirit. One who was born with small capacity for acquiring knowledge or thinking along scientific lines or expressing ideas in senate chambers is not suddenly transformed into a Macaulay or a Newton or a Webster. Such gifts, however, as one

has brought with him into the world, whether ordinary or superior, whether suited to one line of activity or another, are augmented to a marked degree by the indwelling and stimulation of the Spirit.

There are many explanations of this, but one of the simplest and most obvious is that a Spirit-led and a Spirit-filled soul is under the pressure of a great moral purpose. One so possessed and constrained neither desires nor dares to be indolent, indifferent, self-indulgent, to neglect chances for doing good, and to fritter away life. On the contrary, he feels that he must bring all his faculties, whether of brain or heart, into the best state of cultivation possible to him, and meantime and always to hold them under bonds to service. This, as the apostle says, is why men who are called foolish by the world so often confound and outstrip the more brilliant; and why men who are small and weak in the estimation of their contemporaries so often achieve triumphs that excite lasting wonder. The Spirit is in them. The Spirit is shaping their aims and directing their actions. They think and see and feel and work in the Spirit, and under the propulsive energy of the Spirit. After all is over, we say with an air of superior discernment of such men and women as Bunyan and Moody, Mary Lyon and Isabella Thoburn: "Oh, but they had genius!" Verily. But without the Spirit to illuminate and guide and endue with power who, outside of their own circles, would ever have heard of them? "Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the

inner man" is the open approach to the vast stores of courage and energy which are lodged in the grace of God, and the secret of not a few of the most heroic and successful lives in all history.

It is a fact of largest significance that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus. Why was it? Stalker in commenting on this says,—what other writers have also said,—that it "was neither a meaningless display nor merely a signal to the Baptist. It was the symbol of a special gift there given to qualify Him for His work, and crown the long development of His peculiar powers." The startling pertinency of the latter clause of this statement lies in the point which the eminent Scotch Professor does not hesitate to make: "An immediate effect of this new endowment appears to have been one often experienced in less degree by others, who, in their small measure, have received the same gift of the Spirit for work. His whole being was excited about His work. His desires to be engaged in it were raised to the highest pitch, and His thoughts were intensely occupied about the means of its accomplishment."

This is all in accord with the facts. Jesus waited, as the Twelve after Him waited, for the descent of the Spirit before proceeding to the mighty task appointed to His hands. After receiving the Spirit, as was also true of those who were to be known in a special sense as His messengers and apostles, He entered with eager determination and convincing demonstrations of power upon His mission.

If Jesus needed the Spirit to fit Him to do what

He came to the earth to do, how much more do weak and sinful men, no matter how changed in purpose and transformed in character, need the Spirit! As Dr. Denio has said: "There is no Christian service worthy the name without the Spirit. Theology, knowledge, teaching, organization, ceremonial worship, words, profession,—all these by themselves are inefficient. They are dry bones. The Holy Spirit alone can give them life." Words, these are, to be weighed and deeply pondered. If we have frequent occasion to mourn our ill success in Christian service, may we not, in many instances, find the secret of the failure right here—in our unwillingness to come under the direction and power of the Spirit?

The Holy Spirit comforts and sustains.

In all our infirmities the Spirit is our helper. Had we no other assurance these words of our Lord might well be counted sufficient to fill our hearts with an enduring confidence. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever,—even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." But there are other words of Jesus to the same effect; and multiplied experiences recorded in the New Testament and repeated all down through the centuries to justify the expectation that the helpful ministries of the Spirit will not fail us, either in the ordinary ongoings of life or in the emergencies which try us to the utmost.

The Spirit mediates between the wisdom, the strength, and the measureless grace of God in Christ and our human needs. When weakened and wearied by bodily ailments, when sorely perplexed and troubled in mind, when oppressed and bewildered by distressing calamities, when smitten by sore bereavements and it is night in the heart and the skies are black with storms, there is no support on which we can lean and no consolation to which we can turn like the support and consolation which are found in the wise and tender ministries of the Spirit. Robert Herrick has put many devout souls under tender obligations for just the words they wanted in some trying exigency:

> "In the hour of my distress,
> When temptations me oppress,
> And when I my sins confess,
> Sweet Spirit comfort me."

The Spirit teaches the meaning of pain and disappointment, and both the need and value of patience and trust under affliction. Above all the Spirit testifies of Christ in such unexpected ways when we are in special need of His comfort that faith in Him is greatly strengthened and inexpressibly sweetened. "Am glad to see you out again," said one friend to another as they met on a bright morning, "for I heard you were very ill." "Yes," was the reply, "but that is not the name to give to it." Then he added: "It is not so much that I have been ill as that I have been to school to Christ, and that the Spirit has been teaching me what I never knew before." Under

the gentle constraint of the Spirit, sorrow, like the law, brings men to the Son of God. Sorrow, indeed, is but a barren experience, as are all defeats and losses, unless interpreted to our consciousness and sanctified to our moral welfare by the Spirit. Receiving the Spirit, worshiping in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, living in the Spirit, doing our work in the strength of the Spirit, keeping the ear open to the whisperings of the Spirit and the heart ever responsive to the influences of the Spirit, will insure to the soul a never failing support in trouble, and an inward consolation which will have in it the sweetness of a smile of God.

But in all our waiting on the Spirit, and in all our expectations of what may come from the Spirit, what dear old Philip Melanchthon said is never to be forgotten: "The Holy Spirit loves silence, in which He steals into our hearts and makes His home with those intent, not upon vainglory, but on learning the truth." Least of all are we to forget the great affirmation which so impressed the prophet: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Growth in this conception and use of the Spirit is growth in Spiritual Culture.

X

INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

—*The Apostle Paul.*

"Christ—is the type of the religious life."

—*James Martineau.*

"There is no way to become acquainted with Christ without giving ourselves to Him."

—*John A. Hutton.*

"A Christian's connection with Christ is totally different from a pupil's relation to his teacher, or a servant's connection with his master, or a philosopher's communion with his founder. A Christian is so truly knit to Christ that he is represented by a branch in a tree, not tied on, not mechanically fastened to the parent stem, but part and parcel of its substance, deriving nutriment and sap from its roots, and bearing fruit, not in virtue of its own vitality, but of a vitality derived from the stem and roots with which it is connected."

—*John Cumming.*

"Jesus deliberately connects Himself with the lowliest of His brethren, and bids us see Him in them. He claims of us, in our spiritual attitude to the germ of possibility in our brother, what would be natural in us only toward its noblest development. If it be said that this claim is explicit in relation to the Christian Society only, it is implicit in the Cross in relation to all men."

—*H. Wheeler Robinson.*

X

INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

WHAT is it to be in intimate fellowship with Christ?

We know what it is to turn the eye inward and hold communion with our own souls. We know what it is to come into close and sacred oneness with a cherished friend. We know what it is to catch the thought of a favorite author and fall under the spell of his genius. We know what it is to draw near to the heart of nature, and let stars and flowers, clouds and mountains, running brooks and wide sweeping landscapes, speak to us in "a various language," and fill us with delight in the beauty and order of the wonderful world about us.

Is intimate fellowship with our Lord suggested, or outlined, or to any appreciable degree interpreted to us in these experiences?

Most assuredly. Only it must be understood that this intimacy is something far deeper, finer, richer, and more inspiring than any experience to which we can liken it, or any analogy under which we can set it forth.

It is a human personality maintaining a mind-to-mind and heart-to-heart relation with a divine personality. It is opening all the inlets of our being to the influence of Jesus. It is living, think-

ing, struggling, hoping, forming our plans and reaching our conclusions in a mental and moral atmosphere created by the presence of Jesus. It is talking with Jesus in the mood of a familiar and unobstructed friendship in which nothing is kept from Him, but all is stated—all is confessed; and all in turn is received from Him which He wishes to communicate. In this simple, natural, frank way it is laying before Jesus all our perplexities, troubles, burdens, misgivings, shortcomings, serious failures, and sins, whether of the easily-besetting or grosser sort, as well as making known to Him our aspirations and outreachings after the better things which are open to us. It is looking unto Jesus, and doing our best to be like Him in will and spirit and aim. It is sitting at the feet of Jesus, cultivating our minds in the school of His ideas, and finding in Him our standard of action and our type of character.

Looked at in a more orderly way, it may be said that intimate fellowship with Christ involves seeing the large factors of life—God and man—in the light in which He saw them. We must get His point of view, and His estimate of values, both actual and relative, if we are to be in any true sense at one with Him. This is substantially the attitude which must be assumed by the disciples of any master in any school of thought or sphere of action. In our human relations, it is true, persons of different abilities, temperaments, occupations and associations, different modes of life and different views, even on issues which are commonly supposed to be seriously divisive, may

form, and sometimes do form, deep and abiding friendships. It is good that it is so. Not so here, however. If there is to be intimacy with Jesus, there must be agreement with Him along the lines and on the topics just indicated. Jesus as we know Him is not Jesus when dissociated from His nature and mission in the world. We may become thoroughly acquainted with Plato, as his books reveal him, familiar with his theories, admirers of his genius, and excedingly fond of him; and at the same time disagree with the opinions on vital questions of philosophy, society and government which he advances. There can be no such close relation with Jesus as He seeks without accepting Him,—His way, His truth, His life—and entering into the secret and coming under the direction of His "mind."

Take first His conception of God and the way in which He related Himself to God. Jesus had clear and definite ideas of God. These ideas were cardinal and dominating in His whole career. His life was poised in God. He came out from God—was sent by God. He expressed God. It was through Him that God gave to the world the supreme manifestation of His love. He was the way—so He affirmed—the avenue of open approach to God. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He was one with God. "I and my Father." God was to Him the reality of realities, the life of life. What a tribute to His love of God, and what a testimony to the refreshment and strength and joy which He found in communion with God lie folded up in the simple phrase:

"As He was alone praying." His distress in the garden and on the cross, in those awful moments when it seemed to Him that God had turned an unheeding ear to His cry, or had forsaken Him, reveal what God was to the soul—the inner life—of Jesus.

When the full significance of this is taken in is it not obvious that one cannot be an atheist, or a deist, or an agnostic, or a pantheist, without stepping outside the lines of Christ's thinking and breaking connection with Him at a vital point? Is it not also obvious that one cannot be, even in the least degree, indifferent to God—indifferent to His eternal truth and righteousness, to His authority, to His wishes, to His wisdom, to His infinite love, and to His never-failing nearness—without wholly reversing the attitude of Jesus and the spirit exhibited by Jesus toward God?

To revert to the line of reflection of a moment ago, how full His mind was of God! How warm and abounding His affection for God! What tender reverence marked all His allusions to God! With what solicitous interest He regarded everything which had to do with the honor and the carrying out of the purposes of God! How ready and eager He was to obey God! "I do always those things which please Him." Ah, that always! What an achievement it would be for any one of even the most devoted and triumphant disciples of our Lord to be able to say after Him just that one little word—"always"!

We look at Christ from many angles, and we study Him from many points of view. It is

greatly illuminating and rewarding to study Him in His attitude toward God. Doing so, we say "Our Father" much more easily, and better realize our duties toward Him. But it is not a matter optional with us. To be in intimate fellowship with Jesus we must be in accord with Him in His thought of God, and in the attitude of love and obedience which He always maintained toward God.

The same may be said of the necessity there is of adjusting our views to the views which were held by the Great Teacher concerning man. If we are resolutely to face the problems presented by humanity, and work at other than cross-purposes with the aims and activities of the Spirit and the developments of providence in the betterment of the race, we must weigh man—his sinfulness, his general condition and needs, his obligations and responsibilities, his tastes and tendencies, his capacity for apprehending truth, for growing in knowledge and virtue, and living a life of endless blessedness—in the same scales in which He who was the light of the world weighed him. If we think of man as mortal only and not immortal; as being too insignificant to be an object of divine interest and care; as no more blameworthy when he violates a fundamental law of ethics than when he makes mistakes in mathematical calculations, or in giving plants a wrong botanical classification; if in our estimate of him we rob him of the divine image in which he was made, and refuse to do our best to stir aspirations in him which take hold on things invisible

and eternal, we travel straight away, and at a rapid pace, from the valuations of man that were entertained and everywhere proclaimed by Jesus.

He exalted man. He emphasized the original biblical conception of man. Upon the great question of the Psalmist: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" He threw the glow of a sublime illumination; and in the far-beaming light of the cross He made every human soul loom large—large beyond all earthly computations and measures. It is impossible to read the story of the life of Jesus, even in the most casual way, without getting an impression, vivid and lasting, both from what He said and what He did, of His sense of the inestimable worth of each and every human soul. His treatment of degraded men and fallen women; His open welcome back to clean living of all who were tired of the grime and bondage of sin; His severe rebukes of those who would hinder the return of penitent wanderers to right ways, show us what He thought of the possibilities, and so of the transcendent worth, of every human creature. As a matter of fact, is it not through Christ that we get our highest conception and our best measure of the real value of man? So Harnack thinks. Jesus saw in man —not this man only, not that man only, but all men—the high potentialities of an endless unfolding and endless blessedness. Of more value, indeed, than many sparrows! What he is in his essential attributes, and what he may become through coöperation of the grace of God with his own efforts, lift man into a realm of worth to

which there are no equivalents in the pleasures and pomps and triumphs of a mere earthly existence.

As has been intimated in a preceding paragraph, Jesus was never in any doubt about the sinfulness of man; never hesitated to affirm the necessity of a new birth on the part of all who had come to years of moral accountability; and never failed to press home the infinite love and the forgiving grace of God for all men, no matter how bitter their alienation, how far they had drifted from truth and virtue, how deep they had sunk in transgression and grossness, nor what estimate was put upon them by society. His "Come unto me," uttered in words which have rung out over the centuries in tones of sweetest music, and uttered in every form of appeal which can be expressed in counsel, devotion and sacrifice, is one of the highest tributes to the worth and dignity of man, as well as one of the most encouraging invitations, which ever saluted human ears. To think lightly and to speak in disparagement of man; to judge him by his race or color or wealth or rank; to treat him ill or to hinder or overburden or degrade him, or to try in any way to make him less than a child of the Heavenly Father is to part company with Christ in His estimate of the preciousness of all souls.

But there is another important condition of this intimate fellowship with Christ. In addition to falling in with the views of Jesus and taking His attitude in regard to God and man, it is further necessary. if one would achieve this intimacy and

enjoy it to the full, to come into active partnership with Him in accomplishing the ends for which He was born into the world.

What did Christ wish to accomplish? What are the ends for which He lived and died? The distinctive aims of Christ, as we are now concerned with them, fall under three heads, and have to do with three well defined, though closely inter-related, objects.

The first of these is winning the individual man into right relations with God. It is to make the impure, pure; the disloyal, loyal; the far-away, near; the enemies of truth and righteousness, the friends of truth and righteousness; and to restore those who have disinherited themselves by sin to heirship to the wealth and glory, the joy and triumph, of the Kingdom. It is to fit human souls for the best things in the life that now is and for the best things in the life to come. As William Newton Clark puts it: "Jesus is the Great Teacher, and His mission covers the whole field, and the ideal that He seeks is the perfect life in ethics and in religion."

The second is to reconstruct the society in which one has an immediate and responsible membership, and place it on the basis of justice, fair play, and common brotherhood. Or, to put it more concretely, it is to induce households, neighborhoods, towns, cities, states, nations, with which one may have corporate connection, to organize their life and conduct their affairs on the principles of rigid integrity and mutual helpfulness. It is to adjust home life, social life, business, politics,

laws, customs, methods and policies to Christian standards.

The third is to fill the world with light, to carry the knowledge of redeeming love through Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, and to keep at this high and holy task of evangelizing and uplifting the human race till the purpose for which God was manifest in the flesh, so far as our present sphere of existence is concerned, has been realized in universal righteousness. It is no less an authority than Phillips Brooks who says: "The foreign missionary idea is the necessary completion of the Christian life. It is the apex to which all the lines of the pyramid lead up. The Christian life without it is an imperfect, mangled thing."

The regeneration of the individual, the regeneration of society, the regeneration of the race,—this is the divine program. These objects have close inter-connections and dependencies. They start and move forward in lock-step. Each separate heart and the whole world of humanity are to be made to pulsate with the life of God—God in man and man in God. To give thought, to lend a hand, to exert influence, to forward these ends is to meet the conditions of intimacy with Christ. Not to do these things is to close the doors and render intimacy with Him impossible. "Ye are my friends—if." "We know that we know Him—if."

Along with all this—in large measure behind and beneath all this—there is to be much quiet, sincere, and earnest personal intercourse with

Jesus. We are to form and maintain the habit of talking with Him; and of talking with Him in the most honest and searching way of which we are capable. There are few friends with whom any of us could safely venture to be so frank and self-disclosing as all of us ought to be day by day with our Lord. The closer we keep to Him in thought and desire, the less shall we be inclined to go astray, the ampler will be our knowledge of truth, the clearer our vision of duty, the firmer the alliance between our wills and the divine will, and the deeper and more rewarding our joy in believing. Indeed, if we are to know Christ in a deep personal way; if we are to feel what Dr. Emrich has called "the impelling force of His life and spirit"; if we are to see into what measureless beauty and wealth His utterances are capable of expanding, if we are to realize with an increasing definiteness and power of constraint exactly what He would have us—each of us—to do and to become, it is essential that we be much and often and entirely alone with Him. It is not only that comfort comes, and sweet peace,—

> "a breath like breath of balm
> That healing brings and holy calm"—

from these secret and sacred interviews with Jesus; but illumination of the path along which one is to walk, more clear and definite conceptions of one's own life and the purpose of it, new strength for burden-bearing, and a deepened sense of the inexhaustible wealth of grace there is for us in Him who put His life with all its divine ful-

ness at our service, all come to us, like a succession of fresh sunrisings, from these holy conferences with the unseen, but ever living, ever near, and ever responsive Christ.

There cannot be too many of these healthy, heart-opening talks with the Son of God. They are gentle showers which water the roots of the inner life. They are grapes of Eshcol which refresh and nourish the soul. They are fountains from which we may bring back full pitchers. They are flames at the altar from which we may rekindle our expiring torches. They are schools in which we may make constant progress in the study of divinity. How subtle, but how marked, the differences between the tone and atmosphere of a man who is accustomed to being alone with Jesus during a part of each twenty-four hours, and the tone and atmosphere of a man who has no direct and conscious fellowship with Him. In each soul in which Jesus has a home—a settled abiding place—He makes His gracious presence evident by tokens which are alike sweet and convincing. Harriet Beecher Stowe knew well of what she was speaking when she sung:

"As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown."

In reading the words of John and Paul, or in studying the lives of Henry Martyn and David Livingstone, do we not feel that we are in the presence of men who, by direct, personal com-

munion with Him, have entered into the secret of the Lord and caught His spirit? It is not their genius alone, nor their learning less or more, nor their superb loyalty to the Master, that impresses us; but in their attitude and in the whole sweep of their thought and conduct, we are made to realize that we are face to face with men who have been face to face with Jesus Christ, and inwardly and actually taught by Him. The perfume of personal contact with Jesus Christ is in their garments. The light of a transfiguring vision is reflected in their glowing countenances, and the accents of a Voice that never has been and never will be hushed is heard in their speech.

Some things go without saying. But it cannot be amiss to add that the intimacy with Him which vitally associates the soul with Christ in the particulars and to the extent here indicated, is not only a condition and a help to spirituality,—it is spirituality. The man who thinks of God as Jesus did, who accepts and acts on His estimate of the value of the soul, who is doing what our Lord wishes each one to do to win the alienated from their alienation and to secure the release of the bondaged and defiled from the cruel grip of sin, who is putting forth his best efforts to set up the kingdom of love and righteousness in the lives of men the world over, and who is in the habit of holding heart to heart interviews with Him who is always open to the approach of His disciples, and who is the source of light and vigor and joy to all who believe in His Name, is a deeply spiritually-minded man. He has already taken on a

large measure of likeness to Christ. He has entered to a richly rewarding degree into the secret of the Most High. He is an unmistakable partaker of the divine nature.

BOOK FOUR: FRUITS OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE

I

THE SOUL COMES TO ITS OWN

"For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

—*The Apostle Paul.*

"There is nothing that our faith cannot assimilate, except atheism and inhumanity, the denial of the infinite soul and the denial of the soul of man. All between these two extremes of incredible negation that attests itself as true in history, in nature, in thought, flows into the eternal welcome of our faith."

—*George A. Gordon.*

"Science . . . pours the riches of the universe at man's feet and arms him with victorious power. It makes infinite the dome of wonder, and it brings inexhaustible material to the altar fires of piety."

—*Joseph Henry Crooker.*

"Great Truths are portions of the soul of man;
Great souls are portions of Eternity;
Each drop of blood that e'er through true heart ran
With lofty message, ran for thee and me."

—*James Russell Lowell.*

I

THE SOUL COMES TO ITS OWN

IT is a great thing to live. It is a great thing to possess the faculties with which rational creatures here on earth are endowed. It is a great thing to be set down in a world like this which for a little time we are permitted to inhabit. It is a great thing to be the heirs of the splendid and mighty achievements of the past. It is a great thing to enter into the fellowship of large souls, whether in person, or through their books, or their works of art, or their contributions to social progress and good government. It is a great thing to have some worthy share in the beneficent activities of the present age. It is a great thing—would that all men realized how great—to know Jesus Christ in the wealth of His renewing grace, and to know the Father as He is revealed in the Son, and to feel the healing and inspiring influences which come in upon us from the Eternal Mind. It is a great thing to rise into the assurance of immortality, and to go hence, when this life is over, upborne by the confidence that there is another life awaiting us, ampler and richer than the present life, in which we shall realize the sublime possibilities that were breathed into us when we became living souls.

Why is not this greatness of living more

fully realized and better illustrated in the average man? There are two answers to the question.

One answer is that we do not plan for it. Our ideals of character and conduct are not fashioned after this high model. The standards of attainment which we adopt are too low and conventional. We are satisfied with easy rather than with strenuous and wide-sweeping victories. We do not care to accept the divine challenge to live above the world while yet living in it.

The other answer is that we do not make use of the vast and varied resources which are at hand for living our lives on a large scale. We lay the foundations of character on hay, wood, and stubble; and then carry on the structure with crude, earthly and perishable materials, and not with blocks hewn out of the quarries of everlasting truth and righteousness. We let current opinion guide us; we adopt the maxims of exclusive sets and shrewd financiers; and we follow the methods and usages of the world in general when we ought to fall back on God, and lay hold on the helps found in the rich and unfailing stores of His wisdom and strength. God is not far from each one of us, and His aid is always available. God in nature, God in men, God in history, God in His Word, God in Christ, God in the multiplied ministries of His Spirit, God in the wealth of His grace and personality, is at the service of all who will let Him help them in coming into His fellowship and likeness; but His services are declined, and multitudes of souls made in the image

of God go their way in the world as if there were no God.

This is the tragedy of it. We do not grow to larger stature, achieve more commanding successes, and rise into rewarding ethical and spiritual masteries, mainly because we do not use the measureless resources placed at our disposal for the unfolding and enrichment of our natures. There is bread enough and to spare; but we do not eat. There are fountains flowing with sweet waters; but we do not drink. The stars are ready to fight for us; but we refuse their assistance. The mountains are full of valiant hosts, all equipped and eager to be our allies in the struggle for an ampler life; but our short-sightedness keeps us blind to their presence. Motives manifold and high as the heavens press us to earnest and exalted living; but we do not yield to them. Inspirations warm and quick with the pulsings of the divine heart, touch us; but we refuse to be illuminated and stirred by them. Promises with the yea and amen of the Most High attached are made to us; but we do not trust them. Testimonies are put on record and examples innumerable are furnished us, to show what one may become, or may do, who seeks to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; but we give little more weight to them than to so many idle dreams. They do not kindle a fire in our bones, nor thrill us with a passionate eagerness to be clean and true and large of soul. So far as the resources of growth which are placed at our disposal are concerned, and so far as the divine will is concerned, there

is no reason why we should not move on from more to more till we reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Recall the schedule of possessions which the apostle has drawn off for us. "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." What a list of properties! But all the items here specified fall into the amazing inventory of our assets in virtue of the relation we sustain to Christ through faith in His name. They are ours because Christ is ours, and we are Christ's, and He and we and all things which come to us through Him lead up into the Eternal Father.

There is just one thing, and one thing only, that we have to do. We have to attach to these "all things" our labels of personal ownership, and then appropriate them to the great ends which the apostle had in mind when he called them "yours"—yours, mine, ours!

Bearing steadily in mind our guiding thought of the soul's coming to its own through spiritual culture, let us follow out this assurance of the apostle that "all things" are ours into a little more of detail and see what we shall find.

In the forefront of the list of our possessions the apostle places men. Our helpers next to God are men. He names three,—Paul, Apollos and Cephas; and in effect he declares that all that they were, all that they said and did, all that their

deep and triumphant experiences may be made to mean to us, are ours. This is profoundly true. They are ours to the full extent of our capacity and disposition to render them serviceable to us in our upward struggles. They are our ministers, agents, assistants, guides into the fullness and joy of sonship to the Heavenly Father. They all go along with the gift of Himself which Christ makes to every sincere and earnest disciple.

It is not alone these men, however, who are ours, but all men—all men of whatever race and clime and age. As has just been said of those whom Paul named, they are ours to the full extent to which they can be brought to our aid in the acquisition of useful knowledge, in the elevation of our standards and aims, in awakening and stimulating our powers, and in advancing us on the moral and spiritual side of our natures. Just so far as any man anywhere speaks the truth, stands up for right, does anything or says anything to exalt ideals, he is a flower for our plucking, he is a fountain at which we may drink, he is a table at which we may eat, he is a star for our guidance. Plato, Marcus Aurelius, Goethe, Spencer and the rest of them have thoughts which it is not wise for us to exclude from our hospitality. It is not alone Paul, Apollos and Cephas whom we may claim as helpers to our moral and spiritual enlargement. It is all men,—scientists, scholars, artists, native or foreign-born, modern or ancient, whether inside or outside the circles of those whose views we accept and cherish—all men

who can in any way teach, inspire and guide us aright.

President King has a fine passage in which he says: "Nothing else conceivable can throw such light on the meaning of life and the nature of God as the great personalities of history." When the great personalities lead up to Christ and culminate in Him, as President King makes them do, his statement is correct. In this world there are no riches comparable to those of the great men of our race which we all hold in common. It is one of the choicest privileges of all who aspire to know more about the deep, vital, essential and enduring things of God and life, to press forward into closer and ever closer intimacy with the gifted souls of the ages. It is of unspeakable value to anybody to come under the influence of men of insight and vision,—men who have sought to reach the sources and foundations of truth, to get into close companionship with realities, and to climb to heights where they can see things "straight" and "whole."

This, however, is not to state the whole case. If eminent personalities are ours, so also are quiet, everyday, homespun folk ours; and they are no mean possession. Plain, simple-minded people, with their plain, simple ways, belong to us; and they have valuable lessons to teach us. John Bunyan found this out. So did Franklin and Lincoln. His latest biographer says of John Bright that "common life was to him, as it was to Wordsworth, the source of high thoughts and great imaginings."

Invalids in their chambers are sometimes impatient, full of complaints, unreasonable; but again they are wonderful teachers of submissiveness, faith and love. To go into their rooms and sit beside them for a few moments is like coming into the illumination of an apartment in the inner courts of the great temple. What illustrations of a trust that is unfaltering have been given by mothers to their children while waiting through the hours of a long illness for the doors of final release to open! Often a faint voice pitched to the key of the rich, inner experiences of one who is wasting away with some incurable malady will mean more to a sincere listener than the deepest thought of the profoundest philosopher. God has many paths along which He leads souls into His fellowship. He has many ways of accentuating truth and duty.

Children are often wonderfully suggestive teachers. Gathered with us around the evening lamp, or strolling with us through the fields, they may put questions quite as startling as well as quite as pertinent as anything that ever dropped from the lips of Plato or Lotze. How they sometimes amaze us with inquiries which go straight to the mark. Jonathan Edwards was not above learning fresh lessons about God's way of dealing with human souls from little Phebe Bartlett. What he says of this child's apprehension of things and of her experience would be incredible were it not he who says it. God is in the thoughts and intuitions of children—in some more than others; and their inquiries are very frequently

beyond the capacity of theological seminaries to answer. Surely Jesus would not have had so much to say about little children had it not been that their sweetness, simplicity, and beautiful trust have lessons in them of much value to mature minds.

There is another class from whom much may be learned by one who would be instructed in the ways of God with the souls of men. How often in their letters and addresses our missionaries bear testimony to the insight they have gained into the methods and grace of the Lord in winning men to Himself and instructing them in righteousness, through the experiences of converts to the faith yonder in China, or Japan, or India, or Turkey. Here is a field full of awaiting and rewarding surprises for our devout psychologists. There is a vast fund of information and encouragement in the story of Crowther, Neesima, Miss Singh, Chan-lung, Tilak, Pundita Ramabai, and many others.

But all sincere and earnest searchers after truth, all who have done any thinking for themselves, who have had any consciousness of a divinely guiding hand in their lives, and who are striving to get into a closer fellowship with the Father of us all, have something worth while to teach us. Whoever they are, when and where they may have lived, they are ours. Whether what Shakespeare makes King Henry say about there being some soul of goodness in things evil be true or not, there are few systems of thought, of ethics, of religion, and few men who cannot be made to

yield us suggestions and hints which have worth in them.

Now this does not mean that in our wide open-mindedness and catholicity of temper, and in our readiness to concede that there may be some gleams of light in all the ethical, philosophical and religious theories which have been launched upon the world, we are to run off into the investigation and study of all the cults and fads and wild, oriental conceits which the human mind has been able to invent. Not this at all. A mine may have gold in its dirt, but if not enough to pay for working it, one is foolish to waste strength over it. There may be a needle in the haymow, but it can hardly be worth while to devote a whole lifetime to overhauling the mass on the chance of finding it. The wise diver goes down where he has reason to believe the choicest pearls are to be found. It is a part of the astronomer's business to hunt for new stars; but it is the average man's business to make the best use of those he has. The great souls, the true souls whether great or small, are those it will help us most to know, and with whom intimate fellowship will be found to be most inspiring and satisfactory.

As all men are ours in the measure to which they may be made serviceable to us in our intellectual, moral and spiritual development, so the world—all the world—is ours to the same extent and for the same end. Many lines of thought, as we have already found, lead up to this conclusion.

This is because our ownership of the world meets us at so many angles.

A claim like this seems no doubt a bit of wild extravagance to such of our landlords, bankers, stockholders and merchants as have no interest in spiritual values. It is true all the same. To become a conscious child of God through faith in Christ, and an heir of the promises, is to see life from new points of view in new relations, and with new goals. If he is sincere and genuine, a disciple of our Lord has not only a "title clear to mansions in the skies," but duly recorded and certified deeds to many things here on earth which he has not been in the habit of reckoning among his legal assets. For the simple fact is that whatever helps to upward looking, to clearer knowledge of things divine, to purity of heart and life, to giving right direction to the will, to a profounder apprehension of the dignity and sacredness of truth, to an increasingly worthy view of the relations and powers and destiny of the human soul, to refining and exalting ideals of character till they conform to the pattern shown in the mount, or in any way lends itself to the best training of our best faculties for the best ends made known to us, belongs to a true child of God, and may be used to advance fitness to receive from God all that He has to bestow upon His children whether in this life or the life to come.

Is this not reasonable? If I can get any good out of it, any comfort and inspiration to my soul in the contemplation of its fixedness and service to our small bit of a world, is not the north star

as much mine—mine in any voyaging I may undertake in quest of soul treasure—as it is his who sails under its guidance from port to port with his cargoes of material merchandise in search for earthly gain? Is not the little mountain brook that sings peace and joy into my heart and inspires me with uplifting thoughts of the creative skill and goodness of the Master-builder of all things as much mine, in the sphere and for the ends for which I wish to use it, as it is his who, with a view to financial gain, throws a dam across it and utilizes its power to run the loom of his cotton mill?

Far and wide so it is. In no realm of nature are we to be mere indifferent spectators, blind and deaf to all that is going on, but open-minded and eager to appropriate to the uses of mind and heart all that may be devoted to these ends. No man may deny us the freest use of whatever has messages in it from God to the soul of man. Whatever teaches me, helps me, gives me a quickened sense of the nearness, the infinite skill and overbrooding love of Him whom it delights so many of us to call our Heavenly Father, falls into the category of the "all things" which are mine. With eyes anointed to clear vision, we begin to see that "the world" in all that is highest and finest in it belongs to him who has been made an heir of the kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ.

There are many aids, so it has always seemed to me, to an understanding of God as He relates Himself to us in His world, to refinement of spirit, to a sympathetic appreciation of the sweetness

and beauty which are so lovingly displayed all about us, to which we are practically oblivious. It is, for instance, a matter of grave doubt whether we have made all that we might have made out of music and painting and sculpture, in our efforts to develop a well-rounded and complete type of Christian character. We lose something which is both refining and elevating when we shut our ears to the great creations in music, and our eyes to the great creations of brush and chisel. Who that has heard the soft notes or the swell of a great organ at the twilight hour in some European cathedral will ever forget the emotions of reverence and solemn joy with which his whole being was stirred? Who would banish from his memory those sacred experiences of uplift which he has felt in listening to some of the exalting strains of the Messiah? Martin Luther, we may be sure, got something besides rest and recreation out of his lute.

Here, however, we must have a care. Not for all purposes, nor in all ways, are all things ours. There are "worlds" and "worlds," "all things" and "all things." Some of these "worlds" it would be better for us never to enter. Some of these "all things" we should do well never to claim.

In our Christian Ethics there is a law of liberty. It is an important and salutary law. There is also a law of prudence, purity, righteousness, self-denial, self-control, social obligation, serviceableness. There is a law, very exacting, very minute, and very wide-sweeping, which calls for obedience

to the will of God. We stand between the two,—on the one side liberty—on the other restriction; on the one side the everlasting Yea—on the other the everlasting Nay.

This is a point to be pressed. As there are things to be used and enjoyed unto the uttermost, so there are things forbidden. Things which can be reached only by breaking divine laws; things which confuse the brain, mislead the judgment and benumb the moral sense are not ours. Things which defeat the ends of our existence as intellectual and moral beings, and work harm to the community of which we are a part are not ours. Things which blind the eyes to the beauty of holiness, which deafen the ears to the still, small Voice, which weaken the will and render it incapable of stout affirmations and steady persistency, are not ours. Things which otherwise might be ours, but which, if we make them ours, are likely to become stumbling blocks to others, are not ours; and no sophistries which we may practice on ourselves can make them ours. We are held with a grip which we cannot break, to do only the things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report. No other course is open to us.

It is not the Scriptures alone which lay these limitations upon us. In his Ladder of Saint Augustine, Longfellow is very careful to point out some indulgences which must be given up, some paths which must not be trodden, some careers which must be resolutely abandoned, if any worthy success is to be won. What are they? They are

"low desires," "base designs," "the revel of the ruddy wine," "occasions of excess," "longings for ignoble things," "thoughts of ill," "evil deeds," and "whatever hinders and impedes." All these and all similar indulgences and temptations must be mastered. In all sound moral codes, in all great literatures, things wrong and sensual are excluded from the "all things" to which we may lay claim.

Nevertheless, now and evermore, all high and holy things, all sweet and beautiful things,—stars, flowers, landscapes, fine creations in art, books, music, refining associations, ennobling friendships, helpful activities, whatever challenges to elevated thought, quickens high aspirations and stirs the blood to wholesome pulsing, whatever kindles burning enthusiasms in the soul to do and to be something worth while,—are each and all of them ours. They are ours, not by the courtesy of tradition, nor the conventionalities of society, but by the out and out gift and warrant of the Eternal God.

Once more through spiritual culture the soul comes to its own in an increasing capacity and desire for religious experiences of a high order. Experiences of this type, deep, warm, illuminating, assuring, exalting, are accredited to a glorious fellowship of devout men and women whose stories are recorded in the Scriptures.

If we turn to the Old Testament, we are made acquainted with a succession of persons—prophets, psalmists and others—who had a wonderful

consciousness of the divine presence and a wonderful success in winning their way into the secrets of the Lord. They saw God in dreams and visions; talked with Him; walked with Him; heard His still, small voice as He whispered to them in the sacred privacy of their inmost souls. They got their lives, plans, aims and hopes so ensphered in God that, though He might discipline them to the uttermost, they would still trust in Him, though He might lead them down into the valley of the shadow they would fear no evil. They had an experience to fall back on, for they had tested and found that the Lord is good. They knew Him and were glad in Him. They knew Him as a hungry man knows bread, knew Him as a thirsty man knows a fountain of sweet waters, knew Him as a benighted man knows the sun when its beams first flush the eastern sky, knew Him through what they themselves had felt and seen and realized in their own hearts. He was their strength, their hope, their guide, their peace, their joy. They nestled under His wings. They found shelter in His bosom. They looked up to Him as their Everlasting Father and their Unfailing Friend. Their intimacy with Him was close, rich, abiding, and in some instances impressive to the point of awfulness.

If we turn to the New Testament it is the same. Lives are opened to us which we are sure must have been illuminated and quickened by the Divine Spirit. Lives, in cases not a few, are brought to view on such high levels of faith, purity, apprehension, devotion to duty, and manifest con-

sciousness of the indwelling of God in the soul and the sustaining power of His grace, that there can be no question about the sources of the inspiration by which they were moved. These lives disclose such closeness of walk with God, and such subjection of their wills to His will, that often we are constrained to say: It is high and beyond our attaining; and yet in our better moods we cannot help coveting their rich experiences. What testimonies some of these men and women were enabled to render! What sacrifices they could make! What delights and satisfactions in Christ they knew!

Passing from individual examples—many of them so striking—of living above the world while yet living in the world, we find ourselves face to face with appeals, counsels and exhortations, all couched in the most glowing and urgent terms, to climb to heights of companionship with God which our feet have never trodden, and to win spiritual triumphs which, for us, have always seemed impossible. In the gospels, acts, epistles, everything is pitched to this key, on—on, up—up, higher yet and higher.

We are to come into the mind of Christ, to put on Christ, to grow up into Christ, to live Christ, to let Christ form Himself in us as our hope of glory; and to grow into ability to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. From beginning to end the New Testament overflows with

witnessings, appeals, aspirations, outlooks, visions, ideals, all looking forward to a high type of religious experience. We are to be ever on the wing, ever reaching forward, ever looking upward, ever endeavoring to attain that which has not yet been attained, ever on the quest for more and more of the secrets of the Lord, and more and more of likeness to the Lord.

This is our goal—a tender, intelligent and constantly increasing intimacy with God. This is the height we are to climb—a closer, clearer looking into the face of God and a better understanding of what is possible to us in Him and with Him. This is the victory we are to win—both to lose and to find ourselves in Him, and thus to know just what we are and what we may be. There is no stopping place for us short of so much of the mind of Christ, so much purity, so much interest in the things of the kingdom, so much of the reflection of the divine will in our wills, as to make it evident in our conduct and character that God has taken us into His fellowship and has speech with us.

How is this goal, this height, this victory, this gladdening and inspiring sense of the presence of God in the soul which has marked the highest order of believers in all the centuries to be achieved? In one way only. We are to set our faces toward it, and then grow into it. Not by leaps and bounds does any man anywhere ever reach perfection in any art or attainment. Least of all does any man ever reach it all at once in moral and spiritual spheres. We become Chris-

tians as soon as we believe in Christ and begin to follow Him; but never in virtue of an initial experience, no matter how enlightening, profound and joyous, do we come into the deep, rich knowledge of God which the varied relationships and duties of life in the service of God are sure to bring to us. Starting means much; starting right means very much; yet the beginning is not the end; nor can it ever suggest all that the journey has to disclose. It is by the patient and careful cultivation of the faculties by which we apprehend God, and through the habitual use of our powers in services and for ends which have on them the approval of God, that we find our way into the sweet mysteries and rewarding fellowships which God holds open to those who love Him and want him. Before we can be at one with the saints in their insight and joy and holy enthusiasm in the religious life, we must be at one with them in their faith and trust, in their receptivity to divine influences, and in their devotion to the Lord's work. God may come to us suddenly. He often does. His approaches to us, however, and more especially His unfoldings in us, are ordinarily more like a sunrise. There are first the faint foretokenings of approaching dawn, then a wider diffusion of light all along the eastern sky, and at length the full emergence of day. Complete realization of what God wants us to be and to do, and of the helps He has provided for us, never come with a flash.

Paul had to wait and find out by degrees what had happened to him there at the gate of Damas-

cus. Only after much reflection and wide experience would it have occurred to him to write the astonishing statement which he made to the Corinthians about their immense possessions. Jacob learned a great lesson in a single night at Bethel when he had his impressive vision-dream, and with the eyes of the inner man looked into the face of the Lord; but he knew vastly more concerning the divine methods of reaching and awakening the moral consciousness of men and bringing important ends to pass, after he had gone down into Egypt and heard Joseph's story, than he knew or could have been made to know before.

Indeed, it is only as we get on and up in soul development, and are able to pass from grade to grade in divine knowledge, and to add experience to experience of enrichment through the divine love, that we have any suitable comprehension of the multiplied ways in which we are carried forward into conformity to the divine will. Some men start with a larger capital of faith and earnestness than others. Some men grow faster; some are quicker to appropriate incidents and events to their good; but no man knows it all at the start, whatever the start may be. No man can foresee in what schools of disappointment and pain and loss he is to be taught his deepest lessons. To him that hath shall be given. The higher we climb the more our horizons expand, and the more the things which we can make serviceable to the expanding life of the soul.

Now to rise into the rich, the uplifting, the divinely energizing, and the immeasurably reward-

ing experiences of God in the soul—experiences which have been so splendidly illustrated by devout men and women in the centuries which are past—and to know God as we are sure He may be known is an aspiration worthy to be cherished. It is not that our experiences are to be exact duplicates of the experiences of the ancient worthies. They are to be our own, personal to each of us; but they are to be experiences of the divine dealing with us,—of the divine indwelling and guidance, of the divine strengthening and joy, and of the hope which maketh not ashamed.

It is sad to see what conceptions many people have of the Christian life—so low and meager and wholly unworthy. If there is anything more sad it is to see how little effort is put forth to realize even these low conceptions in their daily doings. We may not be able to put armies of aliens to flight, but we ought to have enough knowledge of God and His ways of equipping men for their conflicts not to be surprised to the point of utter incredulity when the feat is performed. We are not likely to hear God's voice in the temple just as Isaiah heard it; to see Christ walking on the water to our relief; to behold while yet in the flesh the vision of the Son of God in the radiance in which the Apostles saw it on the Mount of Transfiguration; to catch the accents of His voice as they fell on the ears of His disciples in the upper chamber, or on the two as they journeyed to Emmaus; but we ought at least to have enough experiences of our own to see what all these disclosures mean. It is still possible to see God, to

hear God, to know God, in an intimate, personal way; and no disciple of our Lord ought to rest content until eye and ear and all faculties of the soul have been trained into such receptiveness to things divine that he can have a rich and deep religious experience.

Through spiritual culture the soul comes to its own in the confident expectation of life beyond the grave.

This is an asset of inestimable worth. The significance and dignity of our being, our comfort in hours of bereavement and sore distress, the fidelity and earnestness with which we cultivate the faculties that lie on the diviner side of our natures, our views of God and the universe, are all matters vitally related to the opinions we may hold and the convictions we may cherish, concerning the life to come. If we are clear and firm in our faith in a future life—a life individual, personal, conscious, endless—then the value of everything else that is good and desirable goes up, as otherwise it goes down. To believe in the continued existence of the soul in its distinctive individuality makes it not only easier but necessary to believe in God, in a rational universe, and in a moral order which takes up into itself all types and forms of life and matter, all laws, all movements and events, and a purpose and end in creation worthy of an Infinite Intelligence. Next to leaving a personal God out of creation, we can think of nothing so disastrous and bewildering as making the end of life here on earth

the end of the conscious personal life of the human soul.

The argument for immortality assumes many forms.

Men who are normal have an instinctive desire for a continued and ever-enlarging life. The broader and better they are the more intense is their eagerness to keep right on and on,—not necessarily on and on under present conditions, but in some sphere where the intellectual and moral powers which rational creatures possess shall have unobstructed opportunity to unfold in knowledge, service and joy, and advance into all high and holy fellowships. It would seem as if an all-wise, all-loving, and all mighty Creator, such as we are constrained to think our God must be, would not have planted these instincts in our natures had there been no valid ground for our looking forward to their realization.

Men have capacity for an endless development; but life here, even though it be lived in the most favorable circumstances and prolonged to the utmost limit, is not sufficient for the full development and ripening of our faculties. It is just as irrational to think that God is through with us — has put into us all that He wants to put into us, has got out of us all that He wants to get out of us — when the clock has ticked off our little span of three score years and ten. This is the contention of Kant. We have to assume God, freedom and the immortality of the soul, or we make no headway in solving the mysteries of life. In other words, the capacity and the duty of man are

impregnable fortresses of faith in the future existence of the soul. Life cannot fulfill its prophecies and meet the demands laid upon it without projection beyond the grave. We may still confess our limitations of forecast on the question, and harbor all the doubts we can conjure up; but it is inconceivable that the human soul has been called into being and endowed so lavishly to last only for a day. God is not a mocker. He does not sit in the heavens and laugh at the dreams and groundless anticipations of His rational creatures here on earth.

To many minds the resurrection of Christ is the strongest evidence which can be adduced in proof of life after death. For a very large number of reasons this is a well-grounded confidence. It is a well-authenticated fact; and then it is made still more convincing by the large number of considerations into harmony with which it falls.

Turning to Jesus Himself, however, for His views on the question, what do we find? We find that He assumes a future life. The life to come is as much fact to Him as the life that now is. Plato argues the point; and he is assured in his convictions of the reality of the continued existence of the soul by the considerations which he is able to bring forward in its support. Paul argues the point. He accepts the fact of it; urges others to accept the fact of it; and he gives most potent reasons for the attitude which he maintains. Other great writers in the several departments of science, philosophy and ethics argue it. Jesus took the future life of the soul for granted.

He did not marshal a line of facts in proof of it, and so lay down premises and draw conclusions in its defense,—He simply presupposed it in all His teaching. It was sky over Him, earth under Him, and the air He breathed. To speak of God as a Father, ever living, personal, loving; to speak of human beings as children of God the Father, made in His image, with endowments which fit them for a life to come and with responsibilities for which they must answer in the hereafter; to speak of dwelling places and companionships awaiting His followers in the unseen and unexplored future were all modes of utterance as natural to Jesus as His mother tongue.

To begin with, Jesus believed in His own immortality. He was conscious of a life which men could not take from Him and over which death had no power. He lays down His life; but He lays it down that He may take it again. I am with you alway,—here, there, everywhere, alway. Because I live, ye shall live also,—I, I, because I live.

Then explain it as we may, reduce and modify it as we may, that awful scene of a final judgment which our Lord has drawn carries with it more than a mere implication of a future conscious life. Without this fact, clear and vivid in His mind and standing out as the background of the picture, nobody would have been quicker than Jesus Himself to see that the words are a mere play of fancy. If there is to be a judgment for deeds done in the body, there must be living souls to be judged. The conception of Jesus was that this

universe belongs to the Father—is the Father's House,—and that in it there are countless apartments in which His children are to reside in the fullness and joy of an expanding life. I go to prepare a place for you; but if I go I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am there ye may be also. That was the hope, the attractive and sublime assurance, which Jesus held out to His own—His true disciples. They were to have a future life, they were to live that life in His fellowship. What assurance did He give them of this? He gave them the most conclusive of all His statements. He said: *If,*—if it were not so, if there were not many abiding-places in the Father's House, if there were not to be limitless opportunity for communion with Him and with the Father and with pure and aspiring souls over in the unseen realms, if there were not a life to come,—*if it were not so, I would have told you.* On a matter of this transcendent import to all souls, He could not, He would not, have left His followers in ignorance. Jesus spoke on His own authority and out of His own assurance.

What gives its high value to these avowals of our Lord concerning a future life? What makes them so convincing that we fall back on them and rest confidently in the assurance which they hold? It is Jesus Christ Himself. In spiritual qualities and masteries, in the apprehension of spiritual truths and realities, Jesus stands at the head of our human race. He knew more about God, more about the soul, more about the meaning, powers and possibilities of life, more about the outlook

and destiny of man, than any other teacher who has ever lived. There are many other arguments for immortality, and we give them weight. We are wise in doing so; for they are splendidly corroborant of a faith that is often all too weak. If, however, we take it in its full significance we shall see that the simple, unflinching, unqualified and persistent assumption of a future life for the children of men by Him whom we justly call the Light of the world is its crowning evidence. Jesus knew; and He spoke out of the fullness of what He knew. His is the final word. In the assumption on which He rested we may rest in all confidence.

At this point there opens up to us the value of spiritual culture. For some it is easy, for many, perhaps for the most, it is not easy to rise into a clear, permanent and triumphant belief in life after death. There are many reasons for this; but these reasons are obvious and need not detain us. The thing is not only to master the fear of death, if we fear it, and to overcome any misgivings we may entertain in regard to the reality of a conscious, personal existence beyond the grave, but to rise into the high mood of certainty and glowing anticipation in which the apostle was when he shouted his defiant challenges at what so many deem the unconquerable foe of man.

This we do, as we learn so many other precious lessons, by sitting at the feet of Jesus. As we come into His mind, as we look at things more and more from His viewpoint, as we catch His secret of living in two worlds at once and seeing the in-

visible, we become growingly conscious of our immortality. We may drift away from Christ, and in consequence lose all faith in Him and all faith in what He stands for; but we cannot draw near to Him, cannot enter into an increasing intimacy with Him in His thought and spirit and aim, without coming more and more under the power of the great thought of an endless life.

With what dignity, with what wealth and potency, does this thought invest life. I am a weak, frail, earthly creature; and my life here is but a span; but I have a soul, I am a soul; and the life that was breathed into this soul of mine when God spoke me into being is endless and cannot be other than endless. In Christ all things are ours; life, death, things present, things to come,—all are ours.

Browning, it will be remembered by those who are familiar with his "Paracelsus," speaks of two points in the adventure of the diver:

> "One, when a beggar he prepares to plunge,
> One, when a prince he rises with his pearls."

We start with a beggarly equipment of faith and love and knowledge and consecration; but we end, if we are faithful, clothed in the princely garments of an assured and blessed immortality.

II

LIFE RISES TO ITS BEST

"And the Lord called Moses to the top of the Mount."

—*Exodus 19:20.*

"Christianity includes everything of value in Epicureanism,—takes up all that is true in Stoic Teaching,—gives us all that was wise and just in the Platonian principle of subordination of the lower elements in our nature to the higher,—gathers into itself whatever is good in the principles of Aristotle,—and holds the keys of eternal life."

—*William Dewitt Hyde.*

"When we estimate lives, we find that the Christian life is far and away the largest life, touching the greatest human interests and the largest number of them. It is also the only complete life. It leaves out no element."

—*Henry Churchill King.*

"Christ—alone has mastered the science of right living."

—*Newell Dwight Hillis.*

"The glory of our life below
Comes not from what we do or what we know,
But dwells forevermore in what we are."

—*Henry Van Dyke.*

"Perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

—*Our Lord.*

II

LIFE RISES TO ITS BEST

WHEN the church authorities had decided to build the Seville Cathedral they submitted this challenge to the architects, and said they meant to have it inscribed on a tablet in one of the arches of the completed edifice: "Build us such a temple that future generations will have to say the ecclesiastics were crazy to undertake such an extraordinary thing. And yet the Cathedral stands." This was a brave venture and a remarkable forecast. The result made it clear, as it has been made clear in many another instance, that the apparently impossible may yet be possible. The superb structure, erected on the lofty plan of its projectors, was a triumph of genius; and until it crumbles into dust it will be an unanswerable protest against yielding to difficulties.

Christianity meets men with a similar challenge. In the midst of a world of moral deformity it presents a type of character which is without flaw and then says, in the same dauntless spirit of determination with which the Seville ecclesiastics addressed the architects: "This is attainable; and it is the duty of each and every one to whom it becomes known to set about realizing it in the life." The task contemplated in the challenge is

not an easy one and it cannot be accomplished offhand. It means high aspirations steadily cherished, a single-eyed and unfaltering purpose, and a wrestle to be kept up straight on to the end. But to enter on this struggle is to start on the way to our best. To win in it is to arrive at our best. There is no best in achievement, no best in an earthly career, no best in character, beyond the realized ideals which are furnished in the standards and aims and spirit of Christianity. Planning what Christ wants us to plan, doing what Christ wants us to do, becoming what Christ wants us to become, is to rise to the highest levels of moral and spiritual mastery which have yet been made known to mankind. It is to set our faces Godward. It is to awake to the consciousness of an immortal destiny. It is to come under the influences which are breathed into our souls by the Eternal Spirit. It is to pitch the whole life to the key of a divine music.

On what ground may this high claim be justified? On the simple ground of what Christ is and what He does for those who in any large and genuine way put their trust in Him.

Jesus in His ministry made use of three keywords. He said: Come—come unto me. He said: Follow—follow me. He said: Abide—abide in me. These ideas are set forth by our Lord and the apostles in many different ways. We have their equivalents in believe, obey, love. To have faith in Christ, to put on Christ, to walk in the light and fellowship of Christ, to be conformed to the image of Christ, to be ruled by the mind

of Christ, to live in Christ, are phrases which mean at bottom just what these three great key-words mean. They begin, they center, they end in Christ. They head up into the thought of finding purification and rest of soul, the right guidance and control of conduct, and the loftiest objects and standards of attainment, in the Son of God.

Linger on this a moment. In His teaching and example a conception of life is presented to which the world can show no parallel. No other life is so manifestly divine, and yet so tenderly and sweetly human. No other life is so illuminating and suggestive. No other life is so perfumed with the fragrance of heaven. No other life rises to such heights of moral symmetry and completeness as the life of Him who came into the world to express God, who knew God in the blessed intimacy of daily companionship, and who from first to last made the will of God His own will. In the line of instruction Jesus is the Great Teacher. In the line of aim and action He is the Ideal Man. Our notions of the perfection of character do not go beyond the notions He has furnished us. To enter into His life, to come under the molding influence of close association with Him, and to conform to His will, is to leave out no factor which might be expected to contribute to the perfection of our being.

It is not to be denied, but to the credit of our human nature cheerfully admitted, that there have been great thinkers on morals and religion other than those whose names are recorded in our Scriptures. To these thinkers the world is indebted for

many worthy ethical conceptions, many wise prudential maxims, and many productions of high literary merit. The pagan faiths are not without distinct gleams of truth and ideas of value. The very thought of religion is worth not a little; and that thought has been a large factor in human development. In Greek speculation there is a high note of idealism, of loyalty to duty, justice, courage and virtue; and the best of these authors never fail to quicken souls which are open and responsive to lofty appeals. That is a stirring strain of aspiration and an impressive standard of self-respect and excellence which Sophocles has in mind in a passage in his immortal *Œdipus:*

> "Grant me henceforth, ye powers divine,
> In virtue's purest paths to tread!
> In every word, in every deed,
> May sanctity of manners ever shine
> Obedient to the laws of Jove,
> Which—bloom eternal like their native heavens."

As an exponent of the truth, however, as a revealer of the will of the Lord and a guide into the paths of righteousness and peace, as a moral leader and an example of fidelity in all smallest affairs and in all loftiest demands, as a helper of those who are conscious of their alienation from the Father, but who wish to get back into relations of amity with Him, there is but one Christ. It is Christ who brings life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins and saves the lost. Now and evermore it is by the way of Him who spoke as none other ever spoke, who went about doing

good, and who laid down His life for sinful men on Calvary, that we win the prize of our high calling as rational creatures. There is no rising to our best without the identification of our lives with His life; and with this identification, sincerely begun and faithfully maintained, there is no keeping us back from our best.

To be more specific, the Christian conception or scheme of life, entered upon and carried forward into full development through spiritual culture, yields certain large and definite results which warrant all that is here claimed for it.

At the outset, it brings one into such close and intimate relations with God that His grace, wisdom, comfort and energy become available in all the struggles of life.

Never is God far from any one of us. He is vitally interwoven with all our thoughts and activities. The trouble with us at this point is twofold. We are not conscious of this divine nearness. We are like men set down in the midst of vast wealths of beauty, but with no eye to see; or surrounded by an atmosphere vibrant with notes of rarest music, but with no ear to hear. To multitudes of us, so far as realizing the nearness and agency of God in nature and providence is concerned, our world might as well be an atheistic world. Then beyond this, until we come into newness of life and are far advanced in spiritual apprehension and growth, our minds are never really and deeply pervaded with a consciousness of the need of God in all our thinking

and doing. Hence it comes to pass that on the one hand we are too little alive to the nearness of God, as on the other we are too little aware of our constant need of God, to try to practice His presence.

But when we have turned our feet into the paths which Jesus has opened for us and have begun to learn of Him, and above all when we have followed on to know until we are able to lay some of Paul's emphasis on our affirmations of experience, we become open-eyed to the fact, not only that God is near—near and ready to help—but that He is the moral force which a man in this world can least afford to set aside.

Jesus had two ways of showing what God wants to be and may be to His earthly children. He did it by teaching and He did it by making Himself an object-lesson and showing in what intimacy of fellowship it is possible for one who is so disposed, even while yet under the limitations of a material body, to walk with God.

What was His attitude? It is tenderly and impressively disclosed in the single phrase: "I and my Father." All the way through, this for substance is what it was: "I and my Father." The Father's will was His will: "to do the will of Him that sent me." The Father's interests were His interests: "always those things that please Him." He loved as the Father loved, and He gave Himself to carry out the sublime and sacred purpose to which He had been dedicated by the Father: "God so loved the world."

This intimacy with the Father is the open fact

in the earthly life of Jesus. It explains Him,—His lofty carriage, His superiority to temptation, His limitless outlook, His patience under trial and His endurance of suffering, the serene composure in which He walked His way and did His work in the world, and then went to His death. Never was there another cry like His in the Garden; but the awful gloom and agony of that experience only emphasize the closeness of fellowship and the unutterable joy in which He had dwelt with the Father. There was some mysterious exigency which called for this momentary eclipse of the Father's face. But it was only a passing cloud. The two walked in the oneness of a blessed fellowship.

The significant thing in this, however, for us who are so weak and so often tempted to our fall, is that it was Jesus who felt the need and the satisfaction of keeping in such close and living union with Him, who to so many is only a vague speculation or a bewildering dream, and not the Divine Father. If there was ever a rational being on this earth who might have been expected to think himself sufficient unto himself that rational being was Jesus. He was wise, He was pure, He had finely balanced powers, and His moral strength has been the admiration of the ages. He was superior to the fascinations of any and every form of worldliness. The applause of multitudes, glittering crowns, military leadership and the loyalty of conquering armies, senates bowing in admiration, wide literary renown and eminence of the philosopher, love of ease, and the hunger for riches

which carry with them so much power and the chance for so much display, were each and all of them besetments from which He was free. But He yearned for God. He must have God. Every fiber in His being cried out for God. Not for a moment could He be content without God. Is there not an infinite significance coiled up in this one single fact?

The need which Jesus felt is our need. It is the need of every human soul. No man is sufficient unto himself. Especially is this true if a man aspires to be clean of heart and large and forceful for righteousness. No man can render the most efficient service to the world without God. No man can attune all his faculties to such an exquisite pitch that every key he touches, every note he strikes, will be in accord with the harmonies of the universe, without God. No man was ever born with so much native capacity, so much native excellency, that God taken into the soul and made the rule of life, did not clarify the vision, lend a fresh flavor of purity, reënforce the moral purpose, and in every way strengthen, enrich, and exalt him. No man rises into the superlative of manhood without God.

The Christian conception or scheme of life, rounded out into completeness through spiritual culture, affords assurance of breadth,—breadth of view, breadth of interest and breadth of character.

Few things shrivel up a man, especially if he is at all sensitive, like calling him narrow.

One has to be very brave, or very indifferent to the opinions of others, not to wince under the charge. To associate narrowness with any man is to handicap him in the popular estimation.

A standard objection to Christianity as a plan of life is that it limits our outlook and activities and enjoyments. John Stuart Mill, in his notable book on Liberty, makes this specific criticism. In the Christian system, self-denial, so he affirms, is pushed to unnecessary lengths, and indulgences which might better be allowed are sternly checked. He prefers the wider liberty for the gratification of desires and tastes which was enjoyed and encouraged by the cultivated Greeks.

Does not Mill, however, quite overlook the reason given by Jesus for dealing so severely with the offending eye and the offending hand? "It is profitable for thee." *"For thee,"* bear in mind. It is the "thee"—the inner man, the real man, the endlessly existing soul—which is the controlling factor in the estimation of our Lord. There is a higher as well as a lower life, and a highest as well as a higher. There is not only a to-day, but a to-morrow, and to-day's accounts will go over into to-morrow's reckoning. "It is profitable for thee"—for that higher and better and more enduring life of thine, to be abstemious and careful about indulgences in these lower ranges. Jesus thought it wiser and better—"profitable"—to keep the welfare of the "thee" in mind than to give way to inclinations which lie along the lower levels of our natures and are more distinctly of the earth earthy. Was He not right?

But what is breadth? By what qualities must a man be characterized to justify us in calling him a broad-minded man? True, a man may be broad in some things while narrow, exceedingly narrow, in other things; but what on the whole must be the dominating qualities of a man to entitle him to classification with the large and catholic-minded souls of the world?

There are some signs by which the absence of breadth is clearly indicated. An ignorant man cannot be a broad man. A man without appreciation and sympathy, or a man who is incapable of looking at facts and conditions from any other angle of vision than his own, cannot be a broad man. A man who consents to be circumscribed in views and feelings, or who allows himself to be absorbed in an everlasting round of petty conceits and ambitions, cannot be a broad man. To string together a lot of "I doubts" and "I don't believes," and to proclaim them on all possible occasions and with a volubility which comes of long practice, is often accepted as an evidence of breadth; but it is more often a demonstration of pitiable shallowness. Honest doubt is to be profoundly respected. To pause and hesitate in the presence of perplexities ought not to expose anybody to misjudgments and harsh charges. Nevertheless the fact remains that it is not negatives but positives which condition breadth. Many a man has added negative to negative until at last he has had no place on which to rest the sole of his foot.

Two fundamental conditions of breadth may be

noted. There are others, but these two must never be absent.

To be broad one must come into the fellowship and under the constraining influence of some large, uplifting, and enriching thought. The largest, the most uplifting and the most enriching thought which the human mind is capable of entertaining is the thought of God. This word, whatever shape it may take, stands for more, comprehends more, reaches farther out into space, stretches farther back into the abysses of the past, enters into more things—life, form, matter, chemistries, geologies, mighty star-systems, unfolding æons—than any other word ever taken on human lips. The man who leaves that word out of the vocabulary of his thinking and feeling makes a gap which no other word can fill.

Sitting at the feet of Jesus this is the thought which is put into our minds—the thought of God. These are the lessons He teaches—lessons about God. What would Socrates not have given for three years of intercourse with an instructor who could tell him as much about God as Jesus told His simple Galilean disciples! With what rapt attention and delight of soul would Plato have listened to such words about the divine Fatherhood as day after day and in all sorts of circumstances fell from the lips of the Man of Nazareth upon the ears of a group of simple, unschooled peasants and fishermen! God was the theme of Jesus,—God and what He is, and what He wants men to be, and what He wants the world to become.

Not to perfection can we know God, or be made

to know Him. Still we can know Him in part,—know Him as a child knows a parent. But knowing Him only in this limited way, is there any other knowledge which can bring so much expansion to the mind, equip the brain with so many searching eyes, the tongue with so many intelligent questions, and lift the whole soul to such heights of intense thinking? One may fail to meet other conditions of broad-mindedness, and so still be in some respects a narrow man; but one who welcomes God into his mind and domesticates Him in the heart, admits into the circle of his ideas the greatest, the choicest and the most ennobling conception to which the human mind can extend hospitality.

A second condition of breadth is that one, up to the full measure of capacity and resources, shall cherish some large and commanding interest in the welfare of mankind. A man may have skill, knowledge, genius even, be free and easy in his social relations, and succeed eminently in his art or science or profession or business; but if he cares nothing for the condition and progress of the world, he is not broad after any high fashion of breadth.

What, now, is the viewpoint from which Christ teaches us to look out on humanity? What are the feelings He wishes us to cherish toward all races and conditions of men? We have it all in a single phrase of a single short prayer which He has put into our mouths: "Thy Kingdom come." That is the petition which Jesus teaches all His disciples to offer. How simple the words

look! How easily they lodge in the memory! All the same what measureless significance lies at the heart of them! What vast areas of loftiest desire they cover. So far as interest in the welfare of society is concerned, altruism can frame no speech, can devise no scheme, more inclusive and far-reaching than this which we have outlined in the supplication for the coming of the Kingdom. As the thought of God is the greatest of all thoughts, so the desire for the doing of the will of God by all mankind is the greatest of all desires.

In the nature of the case, therefore, a sincere, intelligent and earnest disciple of Christ is set in the way of breadth at the very start. He may distort and dwarf God while still repeating the name; or he may pretend to an interest in the kingdom when he is using the word only as a cover to his selfish sectarian aims; but if he thinks of God in a worthy fashion, and begins to move out on the line of his petition for the coming of the kingdom, a man inevitably takes on breadth.

As a matter of fact, whether looked at from the viewpoint of religion, of humanitarianism, or statesmanship, or reform, Jesus stands at the head of the world's uplifting personalities, and He inspires the widest outlooks and the most far-reaching plans for the betterment of individuals, homes, communities, and the world. The broadest statesmanship is the statesmanship which recognizes a divine factor in the movements of life. Among the broadest-minded men who have gone from the western nations to India, China, Japan and Turkey within the last hundred years have

been some of our missionaries. The most vital, aggressive, illuminating and catholic literature in existence, or that is likely to be in existence, is the New Testament. One who comes into the life and under the influence of the Divine Founder of Christianity, and follows where He leads, need have no fears of being a back-number in any circle in which it is worth while to be at the front; nor need he shrink from any comparisons and tests to which he may be subjected on the ground of broad-mindedness.

The Christian conception or scheme of life, brought to anything like fulness by spiritual culture, awakens in the soul an ethical earnestness which is one of the pressing demands of the time, as it is indeed of all times.

The pertinency of this statement to the matter in hand lies in three facts.

One is that a keen and aggressive sense of the everlasting distinction between right and wrong is essential to the highest type of character. Goodness — a goodness that is good for something in the struggle for the moral uplift of individuals and for society as a whole — is fundamental to a well-developed, well-rounded soulhood.

Another is that the historic movements which have registered the moral and social betterment of the race—movements for the righting of wrongs, chronic and grievous, for opening doors of opportunity to the bewildered and helpless, and for the elevation of the standards and rewards of life—have largely originated with men whose

souls were warmed and dominated by the spirit of a high and well-defined ethical purpose. Further on there will be occasion to say more about this.

The other fact is that Christ is the source and inspiration of the most intelligent, consistent, determined and forceful ethical ideas and purposes which the centuries have known. Adequate incentives to the kind of life that meets all the requirements of the situation are found in Christ and in Christ alone. From no other fountain will this stream flow. We may look for it in other quarters, but we shall look in vain. It is the breath of Christ in the soul which quickens to earnest, clearly-defined, altruistic service, and makes men and women willing to be coworkers with God in the redemption of our humanity.

This is not assumption. It is not a bit of fanatical extravagance. Neither is it one of those claims which is half true and half false. It is altogether true. Christ has given us our western civilization. In one way and another He is behind our liberties, our learning, our art and science, our ideals of home and social relations, and all our wisest schemes for conserving what is most worth conserving out of the past, and for achieving progress in the future. From the Day of Pentecost until this latest hour, the men who have been the prophets of new dawns, the heralds of forward marches, the hinges on which events of signal promise to the welfare of vast masses have turned, have been pronounced Christian men, or men who were unconsciously and indirectly

trained and used by Him on whose shoulders the government rests.

In the course of the centuries, and in the name of Christianity, countless absurd pretentions have been advanced, and much too often accepted; and any number of monstrous wrongs have been committed. Oh, the pity of it! But the keymen of the Christian era—the men whose policies and efforts looked toward broadened horizons within which to move, clearer skies into which to gaze, schools, chartered liberties, unfettered consciences, homes sacred and secure against invasion by priest and baron—have been men for the most part whose lessons were learned at the feet of Jesus, and whose lives were projected along lines marked out by the finger of God. The best lives, the best laws, the best hopes, the best ideals and inspirations of the world are those which have Christ at the core of them. "But do you remember?"—oh yes, as has just been admitted, I remember, and I grant it all,—the blindness, the savagery, the shortcoming and iniquities of the church; but still Christ is best of all that is best.

As it has been in the past—so it is now. It is to souls new-born, and so entirely, so completely, so all inclusively new born that it will be evermore their meat and drink to get the Great Petition for the coming of the kingdom genuinely answered, that we are to look for the clear, determined purpose, the unfaltering courage, the self-sacrifice and the burning zeal which are requisite for our working at so great and divine a task.

Ethical earnestness is a high achievement. For-

tunate is the man who is born with a predisposition to it; and thrice fortunate the man who by definite purpose and long practice has made it one of the ruling passions of his soul. Now and ever the call is for an applied righteousness.

Our age is far from being wholly wanting in a resolute moral temper. Much of the rush and pluck which characterize the present day is in evidence in movements already consummated or now under way for the betterment of conditions in society. One has only to look back a hundred years to see what stupendous changes have been wrought within this brief span of time in the condition and spirit and aims, not only of a few here and there, but of vast bodies of people all up and down the earth. Clanking chains no longer mock the claims of liberty and equal rights under the flag of the Great Republic. Serfdom has faded into a tradition in Russia. An ecclesiastical oligarchy no longer has complete control of civil affairs in Italy. Ireland is moving toward her long-coveted self-control. Light is pouring in at a thousand angles upon the Dark Continent. Cannibal islands have become civilized and humane. Japan has emerged from seclusion, and taken her place in the great family of nations. China has tried at least to break the spell of ages and join the increasing procession of self-governing states. The old indifference to industrial and social conditions is no longer tolerated. Many and most gratifying advances have been made in public opinion and in the general improvement of the relations of the strong to the weak, the fortunate

to the unfortunate in the great outer world. Instead of being discouraged because so little has been done, we ought all of us to be elated because so much has been done.

In face of all this, however, there are still many monstrous wrongs to be righted, many crushing burdens to be lifted, and countless distresses and sorrows to be relieved. Greed is still greedy. Men of skill and cunning are using their wits to despoil the weak. The inhumanity of man to man in our day as of old makes countless millions mourn. In instances appalling to contemplate conscience is unheeded, justice is thwarted, and the moans of the injured and neglected fall on deaf ears. There are throngs of men who still love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. We have made progress in exposing dens of iniquity; but the light we have gained discloses chambers whose depths of darkness we had not previously known or even suspected. The distance we have already traveled in the right direction seems only to bring into clearer perspective the vast distance we have yet to go to reach the goal of a redeemed and perfected humanity. The holy grail we seek is a human race made intelligent, clean of heart and hand, and loyal to every highest ideal of conduct and character presented to us in the Son of God. Even the blindest eye cannot fail to see how far we are from the realization of this high dream.

So the Voice still cries to us—cries even as of old—from out the wilderness. The call is for the dedication to ethical ends of a very much larger share of the courage and earnestness, of the skill

and enthusiasm, which are now devoted to material undertakings, than at present is given to these higher interests. Men of genius have helped the world by their inventions and discoveries, by the vast enterprises they have inaugurated, by their contributions to art and literature; but no man has met the full measure of his duty unless some portion of his time, his ability, his substance, his personality, has been laid on the altar of the public welfare. There is something for the rich and strong besides adding to their acres, building palaces for display, increasing the output of their mills, and adding to the plethoric abundance of their stocks and bonds. There is a mission for our multimillionaires more worthy of their ambition and more creditable to their fame than raising sons to recruit the ranks of spendthrifts and dudes, and daughters to be the wives of fortune hunters and libertines.

In the most of us the moral earnestness into which we come through faith in Christ is a grace, a habit, a force to be cultivated. Initiation into the Christian life is not an experience without variations; nor is it as all-inclusive and constraining in some cases as in others. In the way of apprehension and surrender to the divine will, the new birth means vastly more in some persons than in others; but it never means at the outset all that there is in it. It never stands for its full measure of dignity and power until the whole soul has been brought into the mind of the Master, and is fired with a passionate eagerness to see individual lives renewed, all evils corrected, all vices eradicated,

and righteousness incarnated in the laws, customs, methods and institutions of society. When men have heard the "come" and "go" of Jesus, and have risen into a sense of the privilege and glory of being coworkers in the regeneration of mankind, then we shall see our eminent financiers and promoters of vast enterprises, our lawyers of great ability and our leading statesmen, not only pausing in their career of personal ambition, but turning about and devoting a much larger portion of their skill and foresight and energy than they are now doing to enrich and ennoble the world in all sweet graces and moral qualities. There are many standards by which to measure the progress of mankind; but the most convincing and satisfactory evidence to which it is possible to point that society is moving upward is a steady increase in the numbers of men and women who are moved by the Christly type of ethical earnestness.

To lift the thought to its highest power and round it out into an all-inclusive statement, it remains to say, that, through spiritual culture, when it has had its way and done its work in the soul, we come to our best because we come into Life.

God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath Life. In Him was Life, and the Life was the light of men. I am—the Life.

Life is a thing of grades and degrees. Science finds life everywhere, even under conditions which render it impossible for the ordinary mind to distinguish it from inanimate matter. It is on an

ascending scale. It reaches all the way from the lowest to the highest forms of rational existence.

Within our human circles, as all up and down the animate creation, there are wide differences in the kind and measure of life lived. There is a life which is so gross and repulsive that it is mockery to call it life. There is a life that is thin and frivolous; it flashes up for a moment, and in a moment burns back into the socket. There is a life that is conventional, respectable, and on the negative side quite free from blame. There is a life that is earnest, commanding, efficient, with much in it that is useful to the community and to be commended; but the motive power of it is largely of the earth earthy, and what it seeks is largely rewards and satisfactions which bear on them earthly stamps. There is a life in which the affiliations and sympathies are with those who are seeking the best ends and trying to advance society; but which is yet wanting in a whole-souled commitment to the faith and consecration which make us open disciples of our Lord. There is a life that is large, free, full, rich,—motived from on high, rational to the last degree because it moves out on lines indicated by a divinely illuminated reason, and is guided by the hand that guides the stars. This life is The Life. It is the Eternal Life. It is the Life, and the Life abundant, which Christ came into the world that we might have.

This was the ultimate aim of Jesus—to get men over into this Life, and this Life more fully developed in men. He opens the way to it,

through the Spirit imparts it, and leads on into more and more of it. We do not have to wait until these earthly tabernacles are dissolved, and we have gone hence and are to see face to face, before realizing the joy and beauty and strength of this Life, but here and now and up to the full gauge of our capacity, we may enter into it and make it our own. This is the conclusion of all the logic, the refrain of all the music, the glowing hope kindled by all the great and precious promises of the gospel: Life—Life here and now and forever. Whatever in the universe is good and has vitality in it; whatever is pushing on from sap to bud, from bud to blossom, from blossom to fruit; whatever is unfolding into finer moral excellency, is a parable of the working of Christ in a human soul, and of the overflowing fullness in Him into which He would see all souls advanced. His ideal for each of us is a clean, large, well-rounded, ever progressing, fruitful life. I am come that ye may have Life—Life large, full, robust, and not in a puny, sickly, starvation measure. It is to be here and now the Life Eternal—God in the soul.

Into this Life, so high, sweet and enriching, we enter by faith in the Son of God. That we are living this Life we make evident by the continuous exercise of faith, and by a quality of purity, love, consecration and well-doing which admit of no gainsaying. Through the centuries these renewed and clarified souls, divinely illuminated, shine out here and there like stars in the firmament. In numbers ever increasing they are

abroad in the earth to-day; and in their character and service they are bearing unmistakable witness to the indwelling and transforming Christ. So it will be, let us not doubt it, until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord. The Great Prayer which has been put into our mouths is not an idle dream with which to soothe us into pleasing but false expectations, but the outline and the outreach of a Divine Program.

Here, then, we complete the circle and arrive at the goal of our thought. Through spiritual culture, begun in the acceptance of Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and carried on into the full development in which His mind becomes our mind, we advance into likeness to God. Through likeness to God we rise to our best, and realize the sublime prophecy of the image in which we were made.

INDEX

INDEX

Arnold of Rugby, 176, 230
Aspirations, 107
Augustine, Confessions of, 56

Begbie, 47, 220
Bible and Spiritual Culture, 165
Bible reading, 148
Biography, 171
Breadth of life, 326
Brooks, Phillips, 171
Browning, 315
Bunyan, 241

Capital and Labor, 226
Chamberlain, Joshua L., 232
Children, 295
Christ, fellowship with, 273
  keywords of, 320
  likeness to, 13
  resurrection of, 311
Christ's conception of God, 275
  of man, 278
Christian Ethics, 300, 332
Christianity, challenge of, 319
Church, shortcoming of, 37
Conscience, 58

Dale, 229
Disappointments, 238
Discipline, 246
Drummond, 176

Education, commercializing of, 25
  incomplete without spiritual culture, 53
Edwards, Jonathan, 115
Environment, gospel of, 27
Ethical earnestness, 300, 334
Evangelism, personal, 216
Everett, Joseph, 221
Evolution, 181

Faith, the service of, 119
  and reason, 121
  and belief in God, 124

Gibbon, 202
Giving, 230
God, Christ's conception of, 275
  dependence on, 245
  fellowship with, 13
  holiness of, 75
  need of, 326

God, kingdom of, 95
knowledge of, 65
Grenfell, Dr., 125, 158

Harnack, 278
Holy Spirit, 255

Immortality, 310
Inner life, 81
Introspection, 101

Kempis, Thomas A, 204, 251
King, President, 294
Kingdom of God, 95

Labor and Capital, 226
Little, Charles J., 175, 221
Longfellow, 205, 301
Love, 87
Luther, 300

Man, Christ's conception of, 278
Martyn, Henry, 188, 283
Meditation, 195
Missionaries, 296, 332
Money, 231
Morley, John, 81
Mozley, 88
Mystics, 203

Napoleon, 228
Nature, study of, 183

Paul, 306
Personal evangelism, 216
purity, 75
Phelps, Professor, 141
Prayer, 133

Rauschenbush, 218
Reading, 147 169
Religion and science, 180
Resurrection of Christ, 311

Salvation Army, 47
Science and religion, 180
Scriptures, reading the, 148
Secularizing tendencies, 24
Service, 211
Settlement work, 47
Seville Cathedral, 319
Sin and selfishness, 23
Sorrow, 238
Sunday, observance of, 24
Spirit, the Holy, 14, 255
Spirit-filled, 265
Spiritually illumined, 8
Spiritual culture, 36, 165
Spirituality, definition and standard of, 13 37, 42
Stanley, A. P., 184

Voltaire, 81

Wealth getting, 29
Whittier, 163
Wordsworth, 189
Worldliness, 29

Date Due

5-18-40			

Library Bureau Cat. no. 1137

9L4 VD 39510
Foreign

BV
4501
N748
AUTHOR 39510

Noble, F. A.

TITLE

Spiritual Culture

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED
4-18-16	E B Armstrong	5/1
5/6/43	M Graham	